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DISCIPLESHIP

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DISCIPLESHIP PRO AND CON

By
Bob Buess

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Bob Buess**

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INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been much emphasis on discipleship training. Great hunger is present in all of God's children who venture forth into a new dimension of the Holy Spirit.

These precious saints are open to knowledge and full of love and trust. They are like little birds—they are hungry for good food.

They often trust a spirit-filled teacher farther than they should. This works all right in most cases. If the teacher is giving truth, they can receive it beautifully. If the teacher has perversions or part truth, then this open spirit devours the error, also. In many cases this happens with very little questioning or discernment on the part of the disciple.

The modern emphasis on discipleship has stemmed from two sources. First, the Holy Spirit is making people aware of their needs for true discipleship. Second, Juan Carlos Ortiz came from Argentina to America and is now traveling in various parts of the world spreading his version of discipleship. Most of the modern emphasis has taken its material from the latter.

From tapes, books, and many conversa-

tions with disturbed individuals across the world the author has drawn material for this book.

Read it with an open mind. Keep a forgiving heart at all times. Walk softly and gently. The Lord will give you truth if you will look to Him for help.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

Acts 11:26: "... And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

The terms are synonymous. A rose by any other name would be the same.

The word disciple means a learner, or a pupil.

When thinking of a teacher-pupil relationship, you do not think of a dictator demanding that the student do his bidding. You think of a teacher sharing his knowledge with the student. The student must make the decision whether or not he is to follow.

Becoming a learner, pupil, or disciple is not to abdicate all the will and choice in favor of the teacher. It is drinking from his knowledge and wisdom. The student must be free to digest it and decide if he or she can use the material.

You are Jesus' disciples, and even He does not force you to do His will. You must make a choice to submit and follow Him.

Jesus did not force His disciples to submit to Him. He did not duplicate Himself

in them. He left them with their personalities and personal attitudes.

It was His wish that they become like Him in ministry. (Lk. 6:40) It was not forced upon them. They were free moral agents. They had a will.

In Matt. 26:37-46 Jesus went into the garden to pray. He asked His disciples to pray, but they went to sleep. His discipleship program left them with wills of their own. They chose to sleep. He did not force His will in the matter.

In some discipleship training, much emphasis is placed on commanding the disciples regardless of their wills.

In Matt. 26:47-50 during Judas' betrayal you do not see Jesus commanding Judas to submit and straighten up. He allowed the man to break rank and to rebel.

The actions of the disciples after the capture of Jesus show some of His teachings along this line. If He had conquered their wills as some neo-discipleship teachers claim, He would have commanded them where to go and how to operate. There was none of this. They all scattered for a while. Peter even ended up denying Him. They were still individuals with wills of their own.

After the crucifixion the disciples were so disorganized and confused that they didn't even know that Jesus was the Christ. If He had exercised a strong dictatorship over

them, they would have been forced to believe in the resurrection.

If Jesus had taught a rigid program of dictator type discipleship, then they would have been like robots mimicking what Jesus had taught them to do and say. On the contrary, none of this took place. They were very unorganized.

HOW MANY DISCIPLES DID JESUS HAVE?

Neo-discipleship groups emphasize that Jesus had twelve disciples who lived with Him in a very close relationship. This is certainly true to a large extent. There certainly was closeness. However, to say that they understood each other intimately is false. They really didn't understand who Jesus was. He could not communicate fully to them. They were dull of hearing. There was some closeness in relationships such as Peter, James and John.

Jesus began with twelve disciples. Later He had seventy disciples. (Lk. 10:1, 17 & 23) Later 120 disciples are mentioned in the upper room shortly after His ascension (Acts 1:15).

On one occasion the disciples rebuked a man for casting out devils because he was not of their group. (Mk. 9:38) Jesus then rebuked them. He informed them that the man was of Him even though he was not in their group. This man's ministry had the approval of Jesus. He had no shepherd

other than Jesus. Apparently he had never been closely associated with Jesus in the flesh.

Disciples are unto Jesus, and not unto shepherds.

In the author's opinion there is too much emphasis on shepherds in the neo-discipleship program. There is a need for good shepherds, but the shepherd program distracts from Jesus' roll as the Good Shepherd. The emphasis is on obedience to the under-shepherd. The disciple is commanded to obey. The emphasis is on honoring the under-shepherd to make the under-shepherd "feel good" as one man put it.

This author hasn't been able to find any shepherd over Paul or similar men.

The neo-discipleship program emphasizes that the sheep are joined to shepherds. This author emphasizes that the saints are joined to the Lord and a local body.

In Chapter six of Acts there arose a need in the Body. They needed some help in ministering to certain widows in physical need.

The Apostles did not command and take authority in a dictatorial fashion.

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore,

brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:2-3)

The apostles did not consider the people dumb sheep. They turned the business of finding good stable men over to the saints. They were trusted to do a job well. They did their job well.

There is no sign of shepherds making all of the decisions here.

Again, let it be emphasized to hang loose. Walk in love. Be tender. God will give you truth if you have the right attitude toward truth.

CHAPTER 1

NEO-DISCIPLESHIP AND SHEPHERD DOCTRINE

WHAT IS THE MODERN DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM ABOUT?

It is a program based primarily upon submission to the shepherd. The shepherd is lord over the flock. Usually, but not always, it is a flock of ten or twelve.

It is generally based upon the teachings of Juan Carlos Ortiz from Argentina. Other men have taken his principles and developed their own program.

The teachings in this book are teachings in general and may or may not reflect the exact teachings of any one particular school of thought.

DOES THIS PROGRAM TEACH THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST?

Discipleship programs confess that the unity of the Body of Christ must be based on the Lordship of Jesus Christ, His love, and holiness.

This sounds wonderful to a casual observer. However, in actual practice it promotes the lordship of the shepherd. The shepherd stands between the disciple and Jesus Christ.

The disciple cannot claim the lordship of

Jesus in actual practice. He can only claim the lordship of Jesus Christ as his particular shepherd interprets it for his life.

FRUSTRATION FROM LUKEWARM DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMS HAS CAUSED SOME OF THE MEN TO REACH OUT FOR MORE.

One person felt that he was caught up in a whirlwind of denominationalism. Activities of the church from morning till evening never gave him time to get alone with God. He would use other men's sermons rather than seek the Lord himself. The Central office or denominational headquarters materials were used without even questioning whether they were true or false.

Certainly this would create frustration. One cannot condemn a man for getting out of his frustrations. However, it is just as wrong to create a greater frustration for other saints.

Confusion and frustration follow in the wake of those who teach "super submission" to any church structure, whether it be central office or discipleship programs.

SOMETIMES PRIDE OPENS THE DOOR AND IS THE BASIC PROBLEM WHICH LEADS MEN INTO ERROR.

One leader confessed that pride within his church and especially in his denomination had been a very real problem. He was called upon many times to be the main speaker at the

conventions. He was recognized as a great one among them. This fed his ego.

Ps 10:4: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."

After observing some, and reading after others, who stated that one of their basic problems had been pride, one must assume that pride colored the thinking of some of these men.

The above scripture says, "God is not in all his thoughts." The thoughts of a proud man lead to perversion and sometimes adultery, jealousy, etc.

Ps. 73:6: "Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment."

Pride puts a chain about the neck. This opens the door to more serious forms of error. False teachings or other forms of fleshly activity soon follow.

Prov. 11:2: "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom."

Pride is the door to shame and confusion.

Humility and tenderness are the door to wisdom and promotion.

Look between the lines. Let the spirit of discernment operate. God will show you how false teachings enter the Body of Christ.

Listen to a man talk. If joking and lightness

are constantly the foundation of his ministry, then take heed. It could be the open door to error sooner or later.

Do not be mistaken, the Holy Spirit can cause a certain amount of levity in a service to keep folks interested. There is a vast difference between the flesh entertaining and the Holy Spirit.

ONE NEO-DISCIPLESHP LEADER CONSIDERED SHALLOONESS IN HIS LIFE ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT LED HIM TO GO FOR A NEW PROGRAM.

His sermons and Bible studies were all on the basics of the gospel.

A person would learn all that he could teach them by sitting under his ministry for a few months.

* My observations are that immaturity and shallowness are not the basic problems in the Charismatic movement. They may be the problem of the denominational world in many instances, but the majority of the Body of Christ in the Charismatic movement is moving on in God. Amen!

Love is flowing. Healings—spiritually, mentally, and physically—are taking place. Men and women are being won to Christ. The Body is getting ready. Revival is coming forth more and more.

A CHURCH TAKES ON THE PERSONALITY OF ITS PASTOR IF THE PASTOR SERVES THAT CHURCH FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME.

One person said he was ashamed of his people. He felt that Jesus would be disappointed if he were to come at this time. All the church members were acting like babies, etc. Everyone was fighting, criticizing, and carrying on like devils rather than manifesting the life of Jesus.

When a church is served by many pastors, many troubles arise within the fellowship because of the different "spirits" ministered to the saints by the different pastors.

In the case of a long pastorate the church picks up the spirit of that pastor.

So, if the pastor is divided in his spirit and/or at home, then his church will be the same. If a pastor is a well developed man of God, then the church will flow in this same order.

James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

Pastors who are carnal will be judged. They pass this same "spirit" on to the congregation.

Perhaps in the discipleship program men have grown sick of themselves and also of what they have seen in others. They have tried to remedy the problem. It seems that they have swung way out of line to remedy a very simple error. Nothing will take the place of fasting and prayer.

If the pastor will straighten up, the congregation will straighten up.

NEO-DISCIPLESHIP TEACHES THAT PASTORS DO NOT BRING FORTH SHEEP.

This seems to be a general teaching among most of these teachers. This author thoroughly disagrees with this.

One neo-discipleship teacher taught that sheep must multiply themselves. The pastor could not bring forth sheep. It was the job of the sheep to bring forth sheep.

Analogies break down if carried too far. To say a pastor is completely like the sheep would be error. In human relationships the pastor of a flock of sheep cannot bring forth sheep. However, in the church a human pastor can and should bring forth sheep. He should bring forth sheep, for he, too, is a sheep.

Paul went out into the world and brought in he lost.

A common teaching in neo-discipleship movements is that ministers are to create other ministers.

This is a beautiful idea and has truth in it. One of the primary functions of the church is to bring saints to maturity. They are to come into their ministry. However, to cop-out and separate the shepherds from the sheep and say that the shepherds have no responsibility in soul-winning is a denial of the basic teachings in the Word of God. Jesus reached out to the lost.

In a general way one could say that neo-discipleship programs are anti-evangelistic.

General assemblies are played down. This is not saying that they do not congregate sometimes, but they spend more time in cell groups or "psycho-analysis" clubs.

A certain college observed the program as they tried to put it into practice in one of their departments. They concluded that it created pride or cliques. In their observation it was also, anti-evangelistic.

ONE TEACHER AMONG THE NEO-DISCIPLESHIP GROUP TEACHES THAT A PASTOR SHOULD NEVER LEAVE A LOCAL WORK.

I personally think Paul pastored works as he went into areas and stayed for different lengths of time. He was the father. He later developed men who would take over these works.

This teaching advocates that a church should not change the pastor since the church is a family. The pastor is the father. Earthly fathers never change families.

Now this sounds cute and nice, but analogies break down.

I have only one Father.

My Father is in heaven.

This teaching is a subtle approach to "super submission."

This leads a person to believe that he must submit to the shepherd as a child would to an earthly father.

Analogies do not carry through fully from

the natural to the spirit. Look at Joseph's interpretation of the baker's dream in Gen. 40: 16-19. The birds ate the bread in the dream and his flesh in real life. The analogy broke down.

If the shepherd were your father, he would be in full command of your life. You could not make decisions without his approval. You could not mature.

In order for the shepherd to be your father he must also be your Lord.

Following the father-child relationship all the way, there would have to be a time when every person would develop into a father, or under-shepherd. This simply is not true to life or to scripture. Some people will never be capable of being a father over people even in a limited pastoral concept.

Notice the inconsistency in this teaching.

This fellow says a father should not leave the flock. Later he speaks of sons taking over his works. In each of these instances he is referring to pastors moving around from flock to flock.

This program is full of confusion like this.

The church is also called the family.

The "family spirit" is pumped up and pushed way out of line. Certainly we are a family, but over emphasis of the natural can create error.

The shepherd is treated like an earthly father would be treated.

Do not go overboard on analogies, or you

will come back talking to yourself as neo-discipleship teachers are doing today.

[WARNINGS ABOUT THE FATHER CONCEPT]

According to Matt. 23:9 you have only one father in the spiritual realm. He is your heavenly Father.

For unmarried women, or married women who may be having trouble at home, this creates a very unwholesome atmosphere and a potentially dangerous situation. This lays the foundation for adultery and fornication, especially in weak shepherds. Some of this has already been manifested.

Stay with the Word of God and not with the word of the "shepherd."

DID THE NEW TESTAMENT HAVE A FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINISTER AND BELIEVER?

1 Cor. 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

There was a father concept in Paul's ministry to a limited extent. He had led them to Jesus. This did not carry over to the extent that it is being taken in neo-discipleship principles.

[NEO-DISCIPLESHIP TEACHERS OFTEN SPEAK OF FEAR OF STEALING THE SHEEP.]

It is often heard today that in the neo-discipleship programs their sheep are

protected by shepherds in well guarded folds so that the sheep cannot be stolen.

How can sheep be stolen from a man who does not own them?

The sheep belong to Jesus. No one on earth owns the sheep.

In "hard core" neo-discipleship programs every speaker is censored. All books are censored. Everything has to be approved by the shepherd.

In these groups they often speak of being afraid of another shepherd.

The sheep should not fear another pastor's voice. You should love all pastors. This analogy is drawn from John 10 where Jesus speaks of the sheep being afraid of strangers. He was not speaking of Christians being afraid of other Christians. That is ridiculous and very poor teaching. He was speaking of the earthly sheep and earthly shepherds. In the interpretation Jesus says that He is the Good shepherd, and the hireling is Satan. Jesus does not teach you to fear your fellow Christians.

He tells you to stay away from Satan, the hireling.

This smells of division in the Body. Everywhere it goes it creates distrust and fear. People write me that they are being persecuted by their fellow saints.

"No one can approach the sheep except through the pastor," states one of the leading neo-discipleship teachers in America.

Paul wrote to the saints, not the shepherds, in most cases.

SHEPHERD TEACHERS TRAIN THEIR FOLLOWERS TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN THEIR DOCTRINES.

One teacher of this group insists that you should be suspicious of anyone who does not come by the door. He is referring to the door, or shepherd, which they have appointed over a group. If he doesn't get permission from the "door", then he is a thief according to shepherd standards.

This smells of Phariseeism.

NEO-DISCIPLESHIP IS AGAINST LARGE CHURCHES.

Often these programs make fun of large groups. Emphasis is placed on small family units, small cell groups, etc.

One teacher insists that he could not shepherd any more than he could call by name and probably not that many.

The Bible says that, "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:41.

In Acts 4:4 the scripture speaks of five thousand believing in the Lord.

In Troas the saints all came together into one group. Acts 20:7—"Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread . . ."

In the Corinthian church they all came together in one group.—1 Cor. 14:26—"How is it then brethren? When ye come together . . ." This was a large group meeting.

1 Cor. 14:23: *"If therefore the whole church come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"*

These were large congregations coming together.

Paul, when giving instructions on the use of the gifts of the spirit, does not even hint of small cell activity.

1 Cor. 14:16: *"Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"*

Unbelievers were present in these meetings. They were not in small cell groups.

There was some teaching from house to house in certain areas such as Jerusalem, but in other areas there was no mention of it. Paul taught in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:9-10: *". . . He separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus both Jews and Greeks. God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul. So*

that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

Here Paul had spent three months in the synagogue preaching. Persecution arose so that he withdrew into this school where the public was invited. His disciples went with him there. Here miracles took place. All of Asia had access to the gospel during this time.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS EMPHASIZE CLOSED MEETINGS FOR MOST OF THEIR SERVICES.

Visitors cannot come into the meetings of discipleship groups without first being approved by a shepherd. Otherwise they are called gate-crashers, or thieves. !

In 1 Cor. 14:16 as previously quoted it is evident that there were visitors and unbelievers present in the New Testament services.

Neo-discipleship groups have special meetings where the general public is invited. The main training program, however, is limited to the submitted ones.

Jesus took His disciples out on a special retreat, and five thousand men went with Him. He taught them all the same things. Discipleship advocates and sheep-herders claim that the greater truths belong only to a select few.

NEO-DISCIPLESHP EMPHASIZES A MULTIPLICITY OF SHEPHERDS.

This principle will vary with the group. Many of the New Testament groups were forced into home meetings with a shepherd over what could comfortably fit in that home for services.

The church is a flow of the Spirit. In situations today we find it very comfortable, convenient, and proper to have large churches where several hundred or thousand can meet together in one place. It does not make any difference what pattern is followed so long as the needs of the people are met, and the program gives the saints room to make decisions on their own under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Should the needs demand small, home fellowships in the future, God's people can adjust.

I feel that it is very helpful to have large churches. People like to go where something is happening. God's blessings in America are on large groups coming together under one shepherd with many subshepherds to help this one shepherd.

The multiplicity of shepherds generally stops the formation of larger groups although many groups will have a general meeting to which all of the participating shepherds must bring their flock.

There is no indication of such a structure in the New Testament. The New Testament was

flexible. If they needed large groups, the large groups were provided. It was mentioned in another part of this book that in Corinth the congregation was large enough to have unlearned and unbelievers present. In other situations there were home groups where things operated on a much smaller scale. The Jerusalem church had at least five thousand. There is no indication of such multiplicity of shepherds. They had elders over them, but it was so unorganized that Paul, speaking of the Jerusalem church said, "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars . . ." (Gal. 2:9). There were no ironclad rules which set them up in a rigid structure. Paul said it seemed as if they were the main pillars there.

If this neo-discipleship organization had been present there, such a statement would have been unthinkable. He would have surely known who was "chief-big-boy."

IS THERE ANY SCRIPTURE THAT DISCOURAGES MANY SHEPHERDS OVER A FEW PEOPLE?

James 3:1: "My Brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

Shepherd, or neo-discipleship programs emphasize one shepherd over a few people. Becoming well acquainted with each other is the order of the day, and living with each other till you nearly hate one another is advocated.

God honors the individual. He teaches over

and over in the Word the sanctity of the individual's home or house.

CAN MAN MANIPULATE THE MINISTRY?

Shepherd teachings present in neo-discipleship groups claim that they can develop into the people the priesthood and the apostleship.

This tends to take the call of God out of the ministry and make it a matter of education.

Eph. 4:11-13: "He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Hang loose on this. Take a balance. It looks to me, by this scripture that Jesus does the calling and setting of the apostles, etc. Then these in turn, bring the saints into the Christ-life.

I personally believe God still calls the ministry.

It cannot be manipulated by teaching them into the offices. God will use the teaching of the Word, etc., to bring about the perfection of a God-called ministry.

Often it is seen that immature and/or man-called shepherds are placed over the sheep.

Many times an immature shepherd will be placed over men and women who have been in the Charismatic movement for years. Age has nothing to do with maturity in many cases. It is possible to have a twenty year old person with more maturity than a forty year old person.

Sometimes the teachers lead you to believe that God does the joining of the shepherds to the sheep. I have seen the reverse in action. Sometimes these "so called" shepherds come to town and act like gang busters trying to take over prayer groups, etc.

One is reminded of a hungry lioness waiting to pounce upon her prey.

NEO-DISCIPLESHP TEACHES THAT SHEPHERDS HAVE AUTHORITY TO CREATE OTHER SHEPHERDS.

This teaching insists that the twelve apostles made other apostles who made others. Some of these teachers insist that this is the plan of God.

I disagree with this. It can happen that way but not necessarily.

Paul was directly called of God.

Paul was struck down by Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:3-6: "As he journeyed, he came near to Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell down to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul,

why persecutest thou me? He said, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

The apostles, for the most part, stayed in Jerusalem. It was believers who were scattered abroad who went preaching the Word. They were not necessarily disciples of the apostles. They were one with the apostles. Everyone is a joint-heir with Jesus.

God called Saul directly. He didn't use the apostles to minister to him. The fact is, God used a very insignificant personage in the history of the church to baptize Paul.

The Lord used Ananias to baptize Saul. Ananias was not called a shepherd. He was called a certain disciple. (Acts 9:10-18)

God's program is spirit-oriented, not man-oriented. God spoke to Ananias. God spoke to Saul. No human program would have gotten the job done. Boards find themselves busy annulling the program of the Spirit, etc. Ananias had enough trouble hearing from God himself. At first, he didn't want to go even though he heard directly from the Lord.

After Paul's conversion he spent some time with the body at Damascus.

Acts 9:19-20: "When he had received

meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

There is no evidence of shepherds (the apostles) indoctrinating Saul through cell group activity.

There is no evidence of shepherds sitting down on Saul and telling him how to submit to them. There is no evidence of any of this "super submission" program.

Paul immediately started preaching. Later, he was called to the desert to be discipled by the Lord.

Gal. 1:15-2:2: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace. To reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother . . . then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. I went up by revelation and communicated unto them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles . . ."

There is no evidence of a pyramid structure.

There is no evidence that he considered the Damascus saints his superiors.

He did not keep checking with his shepherd or apostle at Damascus. He certainly did not ask the apostles at Jerusalem how to move in God.

He was directly responsible to God.

CHRISTIANS ARE SLAVES TO THE SHEPHERDS IN HARD CORE NEO-DISCIPLESHIP DOCTRINE.

Discipleship groups vary, but most stick to this basic principle. The shepherd is king. He is boss. He is Mr. "Big". Some of these men are gentle. Some are very immature. Some are actually stupid in their child-like demands upon mature people.

One of these leaders states that he doesn't ask people in his group to do things. It has been stated on several occasions by this man that he commands the sheep. They are all slaves. Slaves have no choice. They have no will.

The slave principle is played up very strongly in many of these groups.

As a Christian, it is true that you must realize that everything you have belongs to God. However, for some church, pastor, or shepherd to assume the roll of God and command you to submit and get out of your bed for him or another is dictatorship.

You give your life and your all to the Lord, not to the shepherd and his demands or wishes.

Submission to God is not based on submission to man.

One neo-discipleship leader states that ^{Christ} a man deserves nothing. He more or less indicates that a person cannot make the choice whether to go to church or not. He is an undeserving slave. In this theory a Christian deserves nothing because he is a servant.

The slave thing is over emphasized. The servant role is also emphasized in these groups. This keeps the person in fear. He fears to raise up and make his own decision.

A Christian can call himself a slave to the Lord as Paul did, but for the Christian to be a slave to a shepherd and his program can lead to backsliding.

The leader may be an adulterer. A good clean Christian would be getting filthy water ministered to him through a vessel like this. May God's children awake to the evil of this program.

Jn. 15:15: "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

Gal. 4:7: "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Jesus did not call you a slave or a servant. He calls you a friend, a son, and a joint-heir.

Notice, this was not written to fully developed children. It was the Galatian group who was trying to retain the law and for whom Paul was in travail that they would mature into manhood in Christ.

Gal. 4:19: "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

The smallest babe is a son and a friend of Jesus.

He is not a slave. That is an insult.

He is a bride.

One neo-discipleship teacher speaks of God giving a diploma after a man has done his best and the diploma reads: "unprofitable servant."

This analogy is probably taken from Lk. 17:10. The Lord said to them, "When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

This is the same principle as saying, "I am unworthy" when you stand before Jesus. You have no righteousness to offer on your own. You are unworthy.

wrong Jesus did not call them unworthy, but they called themselves unworthy.

Jesus calls you who have served well profitable servants.

Matt. 25:20-21: "So he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Jesus said this was a parable, but it was like the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 25:14) The unprofitable servant was the one who hid his talent and would not produce.

Matt. 25:30: "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

NEO-DISCIPLES HIP CLAIMS THE DESIRE TO BE LIKE JESUS.

One teacher claimed that their first goal was to be like the Lord.

No one could argue with this point. Everyone should want to be like Jesus.

In actual practice they do not always teach you to be like Jesus. They teach you to be like the shepherd.

One is not taught to look to Jesus. He is taught to look to his undershepherd.

One teacher said that he wanted ten men like himself.

His foundation for such a statement was his

contention that Jesus multiplied Himself by twelve like Himself.

Being like Jesus is one thing, but to be like your shepherd may be completely different.

When Jesus was finished with them, they were anything but a regimented group as is seen in neo-discipleship groups.

They went their own way when He was crucified. They had their doubts about His mission on earth.

It is true that a man who will live close to Jesus will reproduce himself in those about him, but to force this upon others to the point of dominating their wills will multiply the error of the shepherd into their lives.

Each person under the first shepherd would only multiply the error of that shepherd. Each person under the second shepherd would multiply his error also. This would pass on down to the subordinates who may later become shepherds. Each problem is passed on to the ones under him.

In any discipleship program one must keep his eyes on Jesus. He is your Lord. The undershepherd is merely to point to Jesus.

IS A DISCIPLE ONE WHO LIVES THE LIFE OF HIS TEACHER?

Are you to live the life of your shepherd or Jesus?

Acts 20:30: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Note that these false doctrines came from within the fellowship.

Matt. 28:29: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ."

Jesus said go and make disciples of all nations. It is evident that He did not mean that the believers were to make disciples unto themselves.

They were to baptize them into the Father, the Son, and into the Holy Ghost. They were to be Jesus' disciples.

A discipleship program must not make disciples unto men. The modern discipleship program often does that very thing.

It has been said by a neo-discipleship teacher that a disciple is one who learns to live the life of his shepherd. He further admits that a teacher is to teach others with his life. The disciple is taught to become what his teacher is.

It is the opinion of this author that you should make disciples unto Jesus. You point men to Jesus, not to yourself.

In the neo-discipleship doctrine one is forced to remain under his shepherd. He cannot go to new visions. He is forever bound by the limitations of his shepherd.

In a true Bible discipleship one is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 4:19)

Heb. 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ."

Col. 3:10: "Have put on the new man . . ."

Eph. 4:15: "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Lk. 6:40: "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."

Jesus, not your shepherd, must be your master.

You are to be like Jesus, not a man.

Gal. 4:19: "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

It is the life of Jesus which is to be formed in you, not the life of the shepherd.

You are to grow up into Jesus Christ, not the shepherd.

[ARE YOU TO HONOR JESUS OR YOUR SHEPHERD?

One well known neo-discipleship teacher stated once that a disciple should live a good life so that he would bring honor to his undershepherd.

The Word of God states that you are to "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It would be wise to honor the Lord rather than the shepherd.

ARE THE SAINTS TO HONOR THEIR RULERS?

Yes.

Heb. 13:7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

Undershepherds are to be overseers by example, not force. The saints are to obey this ministry of love and compassion.

ARE YOU TO TEACH BY EXAMPLE ONLY?

Jesus spent many hours teaching His disciples. The four gospels have many instances of Jesus teaching His disciples with messages from the Word of the Lord.

The beatitudes are beautiful examples of this.

Often the Word of God is replaced by the words of men, or by the "so-called" example teaching in this modern discipleship program.

One neo-discipleship teacher feels that true discipleship is not by preaching of inspirational sermons or teaching the Word but by living a good life.

Most modern discipleship programs do not completely do away with teaching the Word, but they strongly emphasize teaching by psychology.

Jesus said, "The Truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

When you emphasize your position in Jesus, strength flows.

When you overemphasize your weakness, then weakness and failure follow.

It is all right to expose some of your weakness, if need be, to get release, but to constantly relate your problems to others is inviting more problems.

You become problem-oriented.

NEO-DISCIPLESHP EMPHASIZES THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE SHEPHERD.

This varies with the shepherd group with which you happen to be affiliated.

One person of this doctrine once related that a religious head wasn't far from wrong when he compared his writings to those of Paul. Paul was infallible when operating in the office of divine writer; therefore he, too, was infallible when operating as a religious leader.

This school of thought reasons that a pope (father), or what have you, is a descendant of Peter; therefore, as Peter was perfect in his office, so are they perfect in their office as church leaders (Shepherds).

To make such deductions is considered to be good logic by some leaders in this movement.

Some of the men in the discipleship movement do not go this route. Most of them do say, "Obey your shepherd even if he is wrong. God will punish him, but you will go unpunished."

This is "passing the buck." According to this teaching, if you sin because your shepherd made a mistake you are free.

It seems everyone is eager to pass the blame on to someone else.

Often men and women are immature and unstable and do not want to make a decision on their own. They want someone else to take the responsibility for it.

One man said, "I have to move next month, and I am glad that I do not have to make the decision as to where I shall move."

"Who will make the decision for you?"

"Oh, my shepherd has that responsibility."

One neo-discipleship teacher tells folks in his meetings that you must honor the office and not the man.

He contends that David obeyed Saul and submitted to him when he did not kill Saul, and also when he killed the Amalekite for killing Saul.

The truth of the matter is, David did not honor Saul. He did not submit to the office either. He gathered an army of men about him to protect himself from Saul and his office as king.

He humiliated Saul on two different occasions, once by taking his sword and again by cutting off his coat tail. He ran from him rather than submit. If he had submitted, he would have been killed by Saul.

Sapphira submitted to the office of the headship of her husband and was reprimanded and killed for doing so.

Acts 5:9: "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."

DISCIPLESHIP DOCTRINE HEAVILY EMPHASIZES FORMATION TEACHING.

It has been said that Jesus formed lives by formation or commanding men to do things. He would command His disciples to do different things such as go to such and such a city, go get the donkey, etc.

The conclusion is drawn that to be under the leadership of Jesus Christ, you should be like Jesus. Therefore, your shepherd has authority to take the place of Jesus. He commands you to do such and such. You must be in submission to your shepherd or you are not under the Lordship of Jesus according to neo-discipleship doctrine.

In this type of teaching the shepherd on earth becomes your heavenly Father. They do not say this directly, but their teachings infer this.

In formation teaching you must obey the commands of the shepherd.

The individual believer fears that he will be disobeying the voice of God if he disobeys his shepherd or pastor.

FORMATION OR COMMAND-TYPE TEACHINGS HOLD THE INDIVIDUAL IN BONDAGE TO THEM.

The teaching contends that your elbow is part of the arm and cannot move around at will.

You are a part of the Body, and, once submitted to a shepherd, you cannot leave.

They do have some procedures by which you can get unhooked, but this is a last resort. The basic teaching is that you are there to stay.

[Rom. 8:14 teaches that you are to be led by the Spirit rather than by Shepherds.]

One Charismatic teacher, when discussing the neo-discipleship program and its practices, suggested that one renounce the occult to get delivered from its snares.

His reasons for making such a statement were based on the oath-type covenant taken when submitting in some shepherd programs. In some programs there is as strong a commitment to the shepherd as unto the Lord.

This particular teacher considered this a form of witchcraft.

Hang loose on this. I might not be that strong on this, but I would not want to take an oath or make a covenant to a fellow Christian as unto the Lord either.

Make sure your heart is filled with love and forgiveness.

Do not allow your heart to become bitter.

Forgive those who, you may feel, are in error. Pray for them.

ACCORDING TO NEO-DISCIPLESHIP DOCTRINE ONE CANNOT BE INDEPENDENT.

Often the impossibility of a hand or nose being independent from the body is used to prove this theory. In the framework of the body structure each member depends upon the other; therefore, all members must be dependent on the other. If such a relationship does not exist then one is not a member.

Neo-discipleship teaches, also, that just as parts of the body join other parts to the head, people join other people, who in turn join other people, who finally join you to God.

This analogy is pushed further by stating that just as life flows through one part of the body to another part of the body, likewise Christians pass food along to others. In other words, it is impossible to eat if you are not in a legalistic network of a chain of command program.

This analogy continues by stating that the body cannot lose part of its members. The members grow together. They are joined together by muscles, etc. It is impossible to lose one of the members. The members hold each other.

This is where they derive the idea that once you join a neo-discipleship group you cannot be unjoined.

Following the same line of reasoning neo-discipleship doctrine contends that just as in

the natural the body members pass food, life, strength, etc., on to other members. They also pass on orders. The arm instructs the hands what to do, etc.

You can readily see that the body analogy is carried too far.

According to this way of thinking, the elbow can command the hand below it or the forearm below it. Nonsense. Only the head can command the body.

Jesus is your head. You had better make sure you do not follow another.

You are the Body of Christ. Jesus is the head. Just as your head gives instructions to the physical body, likewise your head, Jesus, passes on instructions to His Body. No part of your body can do any thinking but the head. Each member has a direct contact with the head. Your foot must do what your head demands. The leg above it has no say. It must obey the head.

The members cooperate in the physical body with one another, but they are directly controlled by the head.

Your leg does not tell your foot what to do. It is the nerves which run directly from the head to the foot without any interference along the way which carry the orders.

The arm does not nourish the hand. Only the blood nourishes the cells in the body. It is

the workings of the head that tells the heart to beat and pump the blood.

Each hand moves independently of the other hand. Each finger and each foot moves independently of the other finger or foot. The head gives the instructions. One finger does not have to ask the other finger to move. The nerves and the muscles in the arm move the finger but never at the will of the arm. It is always from the head.

You must never carry analogies to such extremes as neo-discipleship carries them.

True, we are members one of another.

True, we are all closely related to each other.

In the physical body both dependency and independency are taught.

You are part of the Body of Christ which is spiritual, not physical.

1 Cor. 12:13: "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, For the body is not one member, but many."

You become part of the Body of Christ by new birth, not by doctrines and programs of neo-discipleship teachers.

All of the natural analogies of the physical body, sheep and shepherds, etc. are merely pictures of the heavenly.

In the spiritual realm we do sustain each other.

In the spiritual realm we do nourish each other.

It is all a flow of love and harmony directed by the Spirit.

It is true in the spiritual realm that we pass on instructions to other parts of the Body. Many times the smallest member may receive a word for the larger, outwardly more effective member. Never is this a legalistic structure of dogmas.

I always keep my ears open when talking to the saints. Many times in casual conversations the Lord speaks to me through the precious saints.

I admonish you to flow in love. Hang loose. Do not be unkind. Let Jesus lead you forward to greater heights in His love.

In the kingdom of God you are called to follow Jesus.

You are eagle saints.

Sometimes you fly high and alone.

"We shall mount up with wings as eagles . . ." (Is. 40:31)

There is freedom in Jesus to find His will for your life.

One could spend all day talking about the independent spirit of an eagle.

You could completely destroy the sheep principle.

Do not distort the Word of God with any extreme.

There is room for the eagle spirit as well as the sheep or body spirit in the same individual.

You are independent as the eagle.

You are also sheep.

You are also sons.

You are also kings.

You are also the bride of Christ.

Do not carry any analogy so far that it destroys other analogies in the Word. Let each fit into its beautiful place.

The contention in neo-discipleship doctrine that a member is part of the body which unites two parts is literally saying that we save others.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is our Saviour. Here, again, the analogy breaks down. You enter by the blood of Jesus and the name of Jesus and not by a fellow Christian.

Jesus alone is the way to God.

You love your fellow believer.

You strengthen one another.

You point individuals to Jesus Christ the Saviour.

You cannot save souls in your own authority or chain of command.

John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me."

You become part of the Body of Christ by faith in Jesus Christ.

John 3:6: "... That which is born of the spirit is spirit."

All believers are equal before God. It is not a pyramid structure in which another person stands between you and God.

There can be only one mediator between man and God, and that man is Jesus Christ.

SUBMISSION IN SOME HARD CORE GROUPS IS TREATED WITH IRON-FISTED TACTICS.

Submission is a key word in neo-discipleship groups.

The picture is forming the life of the children by commands. The child must submit. The child cannot run away. He has to obey. The child cannot run to another family and join that family. The child must stay with you.

They insist that lives cannot be molded without absolute submission.

This is only part truth in my estimation.

The leader or pastor must speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority, but the individual must be free to respond as he feels God is directing him.

God gives authority by love in teaching the Word. Each individual must be free to sort out what is the will of God, and what is flesh on the part of the shepherd.

No man is perfect.

No shepherd is perfect.

This program places you at the mercy of the Shepherd. It causes you to come under the shepherd. If he is unstable, then you are

unstable. If he is irresponsible, then you become irresponsible. If he has no light, then you must submit to his darkness.

God's Word teaches a balance on submission.

PAUL REFUSED TO SUBMIT WHEN IT VIOLATED HIS CONVICTIONS.

Barnabas and Paul refused to follow this legalistic rule of submission and the contention became so great between them that they departed asunder. (Acts 15:36-39)

In neo-discipleship groups there is absolute submission to the shepherd. Everyone is submitted in a regimented (army type) authoritarian chain of command. Shepherds are submitted to shepherds. Someone is between you and God at all times.

God's Word teaches otherwise.

2 Cor. 11:5: "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle."

2 Tim. 2:5: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

Peter was rebuked by a younger man of God called Paul. Paul said, "I withstood him to the face."

Peter was in error, and Paul told him off. He did not submit. There was no chain of command or dictator-type teaching present.

The dictator-type teaching would have

made Paul submit to error in Peter, but God does not honor this type of teaching.

Gal. 2:11: "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

Abigail refused to submit to the headship of her husband Nabal and countermanded his orders. She sent food to David which her husband said must not be done. She later married David after God slew her husband for his wickedness. (1 Sam. 25:1-42)

SUBMISSION MUST NEVER BE TAKEN OUT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE BIBLE.

Your first rule in submission is to God.

James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God."

Submitting to evil in a husband, shepherd, or ruler is not honored by God.

Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

[The three Hebrew children refused to bow to the king, and God delivered them from the fiery furnace. (Dan. 3:21-26)]

Daniel refused to submit to the king, and God delivered him from the lions' mouths. The king repented of his evil and promoted Daniel. (Dan. 6:10-28)

No, God never honors submission when it causes disobedience to Him. God, many times, will only speak to one person about your life—you.

To submit to the will of another human is inviting spiritual suicide.

"Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart." (Matt. 22:37)

Nothing must violate this love. (Shepherds, husband, anyone, or anything)

God must be first in your life.

You can receive counsel and advice from a shepherd, but you, yourself, must pray and receive the final guidance directly from God.

Do not get caught up in this neo-discipleship doctrine of submission to a shepherd. You are responsible for your own soul.

Do not turn your soul over to any man.

Eph. 5:21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

A true submission teaching involves give and take on the part of all members of the Body of Christ.

It is not sheep under shepherd in a rigid dictatorship or authoritarian program.

God makes all saints equal.

No one is to "lord" it over another.

Gal. 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

True submission requires the entire Body of Christ working together in consideration of one another.

It was the stronger helping the weaker that brought deliverance.

SUBMIT TO THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU.

Heb. 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief . . ."

Rebellion against those whom God has placed over you is wrong.

This does not give leaders authority to demand submission to their error. Paul spoke of false shepherds, and he spoke of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light. He also spoke of those who would arise from among them who would make disciples unto themselves.

The sheep must have protection against this type of ruler.

The Scripture teaches rightly dividing the Word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

Never is the saint obligated to submit to the evil and error in any so-called man of God.

2 Cor. 11:13: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. . . . Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

Paul did not tell these saints to get down under these false apostles.

He did not tell them to submit to error.

He liberated them from the bondage of men.

**DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS ADVOCATE
DICTATORSHIP.**

People are told whom to marry. They are told how to run their businesses. All of this varies with the individual shepherds.

Jesus spoke strongly against dictatorship in the Body of Christ.

Matt. 23:11: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Matt. 20:25-27: "... The Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The Word of God advocates love.

Gal. 6:1: "Brethren, If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

It is the stronger helping the weaker. It isn't a shepherd commanding the underdog to straighten up.

One neo-discipleship leader advocates absolute authority. He insists that he cannot

create authority in his own life. To have authority he insists that he must be in line with other shepherds who are submitted to each other and finally to God.

This type of thinking believes that they must be in line with those whom God places over them. Authority passes through the chain of command. If you get out of the chain of command, then you have no authority. Often this teaching uses the army as an illustration of the type of authority they are teaching. An officer in the service receives his authority from those above him who receive it from the government. This gives the officer authority to command those under him. He submits to those above him.

Their conclusion is that there must be an ecclesiastical structure to have authority in God.

This is the exact opposite of what Jesus taught. He spoke of the Gentiles putting rulers over them, but He said that it must never be so in the kingdom of God.

Following the neo-discipleship route the strong individuals are destroyed. Men with deep convictions must submit them to the shepherd. You have seen this work in ungodly governments when they want to destroy men who are leaders. These men usually will not submit to their ungodly programs. Dictators remove natural leaders and replace them with small men who know how to rubber stamp

their superiors. These are yes men. This is what neo-discipleship promotes—yes men.

The neo-discipleship doctrine and dogma rules out men of convictions.

This does away with men who hear from God.

This, in reality, kills the move of God.

Paul said, "I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1:16)

The Bible says, "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5)

[THE EGO OF SMALL, INEXPERIENCED MEN IS FED BY DISCIPLESHIP DOGMATIC SUBMISSION AND AUTHORITATIVE TACTICS.

The Bible speaks of the novice.

1 Tim. 3:2: "A bishop then must be blameless. . . " 6 "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

In the shepherd situation the ego of insecure and small men is being lifted up with pride. Small men want others under them that they may feel superior.

The shepherds in the neo-discipleship groups do not ask; they command.

Often younger, immature men are placed over older and wiser men.

IN NEO-DISCIPLESHIP DOCTRINE YOU HAVE NO RIGHTS.

Your car is at the shepherd's disposal. Your house and bed are your shepherd's on his demand. (By this same line of reasoning your wife or husband would be his, also.)

One leader teaches that taking up your cross and following Jesus means to surrender your free moral will and your money to your shepherd.

May God have mercy upon such people who fall for this trap of Satan.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN NEO-DISCIPLESHP DOCTRINE?

Generally those who have recently received the Holy Spirit are the ones caught up in the bonds of neo-discipleship.

They are hungry for God and want to do what is right.

They are taught that coming against the shepherds would be rebellion against Jesus.

They are taught that rebellion is equal to witchcraft.

SOME JOY IS STILL PRESENT IN NEO-DISCIPLESHP GROUPS.

There is some joy in these neo-discipleship groups.

These people love God. If there were no joy present in the meetings the saints would immediately discern something was wrong.

Unless the reigns are loosened among these groups, the joy will soon disappear. Any group caught up in legalistic dogmas, sooner or later,

loses its joy and victory. They may continue in a zeal, but it is not from God.

Men who have visited these meetings with honest and open hearts have reported that there was a strong sense of error even during the praise services.

MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

God spoke directly to the people through the judges.

Today He speaks to us through His Son Jesus Christ.

Heb. 1:1-2: "God . . . spake in time past . . . by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . ."

This is not to say that He does not speak through prophets today.

John the Baptist was greater than any to his hour. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. (Matt. 11:11)

God speaks directly to the individual today.

Rom. 8:14 speaks of being Spirit led. These are the sons of God.

John 14:26 speaks of God's Comforter guiding and teaching you.

There is a ministry of the prophet today. Generally, but not always, his ministry confirms what is already revealed to your heart.

Acts 13:1-2: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain

prophets . . . the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

The call was already in their hearts. The Holy Spirit confirmed it through His ministers present.

Sometimes the ministry of a prophet is direct and, in some cases where the man is missing God, the prophet may even command.

In any ministry where God speaks His Word through human vessels there must be a judging of the prophet.

1 Cor. 14:29: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."

You must never accept anyones word as final. You must rightly divide the word of truth. You must weigh this by God's Word.

1 Thes. 5:20-21: "Despise not prophesyings, prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Here they were commanded to spit out the bad prophecy. Use only that which was good.

WHAT IS REBELLION ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD?

1 Sam. 15:23: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul had disobeyed Samuel's voice. Samuel was the judge and spoke the Word of the Lord

to him. He knew it was the Word of the Lord. Human reasoning considered it wise to do things a little differently. He decided to keep part of the sheep. This was rebellion. He disobeyed God's Word.

Rebellion against God's Word is one thing.

Rebellion against the shepherd's word is something else.

You must fear God's Word.

You must not fear the shepherd's word.

Both under the judges and the prophets of the Old and New Testament God commanded His people to walk by faith. Any prophet, teacher, or neo-discipleship type shepherd who destroys this basic faith pattern is in error.

If the shepherd makes all of your decisions for you it is not a faith walk. You are trusting your shepherd to make all the decisions. This is walking by the words of your shepherd.

Rebellion is disobeying God's Word. It could be preaching the wrong message. It could be going to the wrong church. It could be making the wrong decision in any given situation.

Stay close to God. Seek His face. He will show you His way.

[An honest mistake is one thing, but hard rebellious-type spirits are another.]

Deut. 31:27: "For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck . . ."

This was hard core rebellion. They had built

up a spirit of rejecting the Word of God for their own "thing."

Rebellion is an attitude of hate for the ways of God.

Rebellion against the words of a shepherd may or may not be rebellion against God.

Jer. 28:16: ". . . Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord."

Jeremiah was dealing with Hananiah the false prophet. The false prophet was making the people trust a lie. Jeremiah did not tell the people to submit to the office of the false prophet. He passed judgment on the prophet.

Rebellion is an evil attitude of the heart.

Seek Jesus, obey Jesus, walk in His way.

This is not rebellion.

Jer. 29:32: "Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah . . . (the prophet vs. 31) because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord."

Shemaiah was in captivity in Babylon. He was prophesying against Jeremiah that the captivity would be short. Jeremiah was an outsider, an independent so to speak. He spoke the true Word of the Lord. He said the captivity would be for a long time, and they were to settle down, build houses, and raise families. The false prophet came against Jeremiah.

Jeremiah spoke judgement against Shemaiah and his seed for teaching rebellion against the Lord.

If God should speak through me or someone else today, and you rebel against it, it will cost you sooner or later.

This does not cast you into an iron clad situation. No, it gives you an opportunity to seek the Lord, pray, fast, and judge the prophet in the light of the Word of the Lord.

Walk softly. Don't reject men's counsel that is given in the name of the Lord. Don't receive it fully either.

Judge it.

Walk in love.

Hang loose.

God will bring you through.

**MANY NEO-DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS
TEACH THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS JUST A
HELP IN MAKING DISCIPLES.**

The teaching is that the Bible will help, but the spoken words of the shepherds are the real word that will build true discipleship.

The enemy exposes himself here. The Bible is more or less outmoded according to this doctrinal approach to the Word of God. The word spoken by the shepherds is more important to neo-discipleship teachers.

Not all leaders in this movement follow this to the letter, but in principle they do follow it.

The word of the shepherd becomes the Word of God to their disciples.

This depends on the individual groups involved.

It is interesting to note the inconsistency here. Generally, each shepherd group is submitted one to the other, yet each has a different version of the neo-discipleship principle.

Their own theory isn't working among themselves, but they expect you to make it work.

It has often been said that the closer to headquarters you get, the more confused you get.

It was trusting the words of the prophets, etc., above the written Word that threw the "Latter Rain" movement into the ditch during the forty's.

There was a tremendous move of God flowing from heaven. Then the prophets got "eager beaver" and stepped out too far. The flesh began to manifest itself. Satan literally destroyed that particular phase of the move.

God then had to raise up another group.

God will have to detour around the neo-discipleship groups unless they make some serious adjustments in their programs.

Continue to love these men. Pray for
Refuse to be critical.

THE POSITION OF THE BIBLE TODAY

God does speak to you through prophets etc., today. This has been thoroughly discussed. These revelations should not be accepted without question. They should not be made equal to the Bible.

The New Testament commands that we follow the Word of God.

2 Pet. 1:19-21: *"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

2 Pet 1:16-17: *"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Peter states here that they saw the Lord. He was an eye witness of His doings.

He saw the Lord transfigured before his very eyes. Then, on top of that, he had the Old Testament scriptures to back up his claims.

Col. 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

They are here exhorted in the New Testament era to operate in the Words of Jesus.

1 Tim. 4:13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading . . . to doctrine . . ."

They were reading the Word of God.

1 Tim. 6:3: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness."

No, they did not have psychology courses or self analysis. They didn't sit around in three month cell groups, where others are excluded, telling how terrible they were.

One of the leading ministers in this operation states that the cell groups must meet in secret so that individuals can open up and pour out their secret problems, etc., to the others.

1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine."

The Word of God was preached . . . no great emphasis was placed on inspirational, "living word" type preaching as is promoted today.

1 Tim. 6:3: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness."

1 Tim. 6:4-5: "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth . . . from such withdraw thyself."

What did they teach? They taught the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the apostles' doctrine and message.

If a man doesn't stand for the Word of God he is proud; he knows nothing; he is creating strife and envy, and he is perverted. These men have corrupted their minds. The Lord says, "From such withdraw thyself."

Men have come up with self-made or demon-inspired revelations in the past. Most of the occult religions are demon-inspired, but they claim divine inspiration.

The Mormon religion claims divine inspiration. It uses the Word of God as it chooses. It places its revelations equal to and above the Word of God.

God uses revelation ministry, but it must line up with the Word of God.

2 Tim. 3:15-17: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able

to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

I trust this revelation, the revelation of the Word that has been proven, far more than I do that of neo-discipleship advocates or any other outside of the Word.

Jesus said that His Words are the Living Word.

John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Jesus' Words are still the "Living Words."

Those Words that He spoke while here on earth are still alive and thriving well today.

The Word anoints and inspires today.

His Words are still flowing through His ministers today, but not all ministers are in that flow. It would be a dangerous thing to place current revelation on a par with or above the Word of God.

It is important that you hang loose at this point. God can, and does, speak today; however, the Word of God must be the guide, and all true revelation will be in harmony with the Word of God.

It certainly is not a wise action to place current revelation above the Word of God. It is very unwise to play down God's Word as something that will "help" a little and use or accept current shepherd's words as the "Living Word of God."

One of the handbooks on neo-discipleship seems to indicate that the current Words of the shepherds are "The Living Words of God" for the disciples today.

This is the foundation of their authority.

If you will go back to their own analogy of the human body you see very easily that the only member which can instruct is the head. That head is Jesus. He can give instructions to any member in His Body directly just as your head can instruct one hand to do one thing and the other hand to do the opposite.

Hallelujah! Hang in there in love. Let the Lord pull you through.

NEO-DISCIPLESHIP AND PROPHECY

Recently in a meeting of this nature there was a certain section set aside for previously chosen men. These were the approved prophets or ministers of like mind who could prophesy in these meetings. Most of the prophecy for the meeting came from this section.

It was further observed that these men prophesied things of which the neo-discipleship group approved. These men

constantly prophesied doom upon those who rebelled against their doctrine.

These men prophesied victory for their side.

ONE MAN'S OBSERVATION

One pastor told me recently that he attended one of these general meetings on discipleship. He went searching for truth. He said the praise sounded good on the surface, but underneath it seemed superficial. He kept forcing himself to submit.

The person next to him punched him and said, "Is it me, or is something wrong here?"

He answered, "Brother, keep your spirit in submission: we want to learn. We cannot learn if we are critical." This was the pastor speaking. He forced himself to submit. He was hungry for truth.

This pastor continued his report by saying that the men were constantly forcing the issue upon him. They were constantly defending their position. One fellow would not let him project a thought so this pastor finally, after thirty minutes of trying to speak, said, "Brother I rebuke you in Jesus' Name. I command you to shut up and listen to me."

Later this pastor was fellowshiping with four other men. These men were pastors of large fellowships. Each one agreed that something was terribly wrong with the concepts and spirit projected in this neo-discipleship display.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS OFTEN TEACH

The Word of God would be used as a convenience, or perhaps as an excuse, as it suited their purpose. There is no real study of the Word. The Word is not rightly divided. It is used as an example where it will back one of their programs if convenient.

Let it be emphasized that this may or may not be the rule in all neo-discipleship groups, but it is in the basic tenet of the text book to which most of them are looking for guidance.

Paul would go to the synagogues and read the Word of God to them and discuss it.

Jesus certainly did not play down the reading and discussion of His Word.

Lk. 4:15: "He taught in their synagogues . . ."

There are many references to Jesus going into the synagogues to teach the Word of the Lord. Notice in Luke 4:15 it said that He taught in their synagogues. This would indicate many such instances.

Lk. 4:16: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

Notice that it was His custom to enter the synagogues to read the Word of God on their regular meeting day, the Sabbath.

It was on this particular day that He read from Isaiah the prophecy that He would preach the gospel to the poor, heal the

brokenhearted, preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind and set at liberty them that were bruised, etc. (Lk. 4:18-19)

Paul followed this same program of entering the synagogues and preaching the Word of God to them.

Acts 9:20: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God."

Acts 13:5: "When they were at Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews . . ."

There are many more references to Paul entering the synagogues and preaching Jesus or the Word of God to them.

[THERE IS NO TIME FOR OUTSIDE ACTIVITY IN MANY NEO-DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS.]

Their programs keep you thoroughly indoctrinated with their dogmas. You can never hear an outside speaker without first getting the approval of the shepherd.

At least this is what several of the leaders have advocated in their various teachings.

Each night in this type of program (this will vary with the individual discipleship group) is spent in discipleship training. Each person is commanded to be there. If he has relatives or other visitors, he must put the "discipleship kingdom" first.

One night is set apart for rest. Like all the

other activities, they are commanded to rest on this night.

One group commanded its disciples to sleep in on Sunday morning.

Remember that each group of shepherds sets its own rules along this line. Some may vary drastically.

There really doesn't seem to be much true submitting among the "top boys", or they would be more consistent at this point.

In some of these groups each night of the week is completely set apart for their own little club meetings. They call it cell activity. This, like much of the other material for Neo-Discipleship, originated in Argentina with Juan Carlos Ortiz.

In the groups observed, there wasn't one night set apart for reaching out to the lost. It is plain that there is no time for evangelism. All of their time is given to themselves. If they weren't in a club meeting, they were commanded to sleep or, on one night, be with the family. (All of this varies with the group)

NEO-DISCIPLESHIP IS A RELIGION THAT EMPHASIZES GOOD WORKS.

This could be a very high compliment to make for anyone. Certainly the Bible emphasizes good works. However, Mormonism is a religion of good works. Jehovah's Witnesses are a religious people with good works. They believe in setting their families in order, etc.

One trick of Satan is to get your mind on

your works at the cost of forgetting the main commission of making disciples of sinners, not fellow Christians.

When God's Spirit is flowing, there is an emphasis upon meeting the needs of fellow church members, but it will be on an individual, voluntary basis. Never is it a command from the pastor that one gives to missions, or that one helps others. It will be a working together for the needs of all on a love basis.

One neo-discipleship promoter suggests in a command form that he who has two cars must share with the fellow who has none.

Forced social justice dictated by the shepherds is not social justice. This smells of socialism and communism. It is the same spirit that is traveling the world today.

"Everyone owes me a living."

This stimulates laziness and causes those who have ambition to pay a penalty, and those who are lazy and careless with their money become more so.

The New Testament practiced sharing and giving, but it was under the direction of the Holy Spirit and not under a dictatorship program.

Acts 4:32: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common."

They shared in a spirit of love, and direction was given by the Holy Spirit.

They were of one heart.

This was not a legislated unity.

This was Holy Spirit unity.

Anything that the neo-discipleship groups try to legislate will only create a stink in the sheepfold.

Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 sold their land, but it was of their own free will.

Acts 5:4: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?"

Here Peter shows an insight into this program. It was theirs to sell or not to sell. Once sold, the money was still theirs. They chose to give part of it to the church. The problem with them was that they chose to lie about the price they received for the land.

They wanted recognition from the group for the large gift or sacrifice, but they did not want to give the entire amount.

God killed them both for the lie.

WHAT IS THE SHEEP AND SHEPHERD PRINCIPLE?

The Biblical approach to the sheep and shepherd principle is that Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd, and that you are the sheep of His pasture. This is based on Ps. 23 and John 10.

The neo-discipleship concept is completely different.

The Sheep and Shepherd principle is another word for neo-discipleship.

Nowhere in John 10 or Ps. 23 is it ever indicated that man is to be your Shepherd. These two chapters teach that Jesus alone is your Shepherd.

Sheep and Shepherd principles make the human undershepherd the good shepherd of John 10. One man, while teaching on Ps. 23, taught the Shepherd principle. He did not read the first part of the first verse which states specifically that the Lord is our shepherd. All of the teaching was based on the undershepherd doing the leading of the sheep into green pastures, etc.

These teachers know and teach that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, but they also apply these scriptures directly to themselves. To them, Jesus is the door, and they are a door.

John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

There is only one Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep. That Shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ. He died and arose for the sins of man. He alone is the Good Shepherd.

None of these verses should be applied to the undershepherds as is being done today.

IN THE TEACHING ON SHEPHERD AND SHEEP THE "BORN AGAIN" EXPERIENCE IS SOMETIMES PLAYED DOWN.

One teacher states that there is much more

to be concerned about than getting people born again.

The emphasis is on teaching those who are already saved rather than reaching out for the lost. My understanding here is that there should be emphasis on both developing the saved and evangelizing the sinners.

IS THE SHEPHERD THE DOOR TO THE FOLD?

A fundamental part of the shepherd teaching says yes. According to one teacher the sheep will come into the fold through the shepherd.

This is the beginning of gross error. You must come through Jesus Christ.

Jesus gives a parable of the earthly sheepfold in Jn. 10.

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

This is a parable. It is the picture of a sheepfold. The thief, Satan, comes over the wall to steal the sheep. The shepherd comes in through the door. It is simply an earthly story of that fold. Jesus later interprets it and shows how it works in the heavenly realm.

He continues with the parable as follows, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

This is a picture of the earthly shepherd coming in the front door of the sheepfold with and/or for his sheep.

“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”

The porter guards the door at night while the shepherd is sleeping elsewhere. He recognizes the shepherd and allows him to come in to get the sheep.

“. . . He putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”

This is an earthly story of an earthly shepherd leading his sheep out to pasture. They follow the shepherd.

You must not interpret this as a spiritual shepherd leading his sheep because Jesus later interprets all of this as pertaining directly to Himself and not to an undershepherd.

“A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

The sheep know the voice of their shepherd and will not follow another.

Neo-discipleship groups teach this is the undershepherd who knows the sheep by name. It is the undershepherd who leads his sheep to pasture. It can apply to the undershepherd, to a degree, but Jesus interprets it as being directly applied to Himself as the Good Shepherd, etc.

“This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.”

The disciples did not interpret it as pertaining to themselves. It was a mystery.

Jesus then opens up the mystery.

“ . . . I am the door of the sheep.”

Jesus alone is the Door. Any man who makes himself the door is nearing blasphemy.

“All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.”

This is saying that any false pretenders will not be the real article. Jesus alone is the real article. Neo-discipleship teachings are in error. The wise sheep will not hear them.

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

Neo-discipleship groups are constantly applying this to man. They say Jesus is the Door, and they are a door. I say they need help. “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) That name is Jesus Christ.

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine . . . I lay down my life for the sheep.”

There is only one Savior; His name is Jesus Christ.

There is only one true shepherd; His name is Jesus Christ.

Yes, there are undershepherds. They point one to Jesus. They leave room to breathe and make decisions. They do not make neurotics.

SHEPHERDS TEACH THAT YOU FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD, NOT JESUS.

One shepherd teaches that there is no teaching in the Bible of people being joined to a church. You do not join the fold, you join the shepherd and the shepherd in turn will bring you into the fold.

The Word of God states that "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47.

Also, "Believers were the more added to the Lord . . ." Acts 5:14.

This teaching probably stems from the first part of the parable in John 10 which states that the shepherd "leadeth them out."

Jesus leads His sheep. The sheep follow Jesus.

Jesus gave His life for the sheep.

The sheep know the Shepherd's voice.

It is not the undershepherd's voice but the Good Shepherd's voice which the sheep know and follow.

Rom. 8:14: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God . . ."

The sheep are led by the Spirit of God and not by the undershepherd.

John 16:13: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ."

Heb. 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ."

The Lord leads His people directly.

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NOT MERELY SHEEP.

They are the Bride of Christ.

They are Sons of God.

They are Eagle Saints.

They are Kings and Priests.

An eagle is very independent. He flies high and alone.

Paul lived a very independent life.

A Christian is an eagle, but he is, also, a sheep; therefore he must, also, know how to walk in the fold with the other saints.

Don't force God's children into the fold all of the time.

There is no end to this. Who said you were a dumb sheep? Just remember that the shepherd is also a dumb sheep with such stupid analogies. If the sheep are dumb, then that shepherd, who is also a sheep, is dumb. Who wants a dumb shepherd leading him? No, you had better look to Jesus!

There is a place for the shepherds. They love and protect the flock, but they do not fleece them, and "lord it" over them.

In the Charismatic movement God is raising up some fine shepherds and some fine sheepfolds which are not smothering the sheep.

DOES THE BIBLE EMPHASIZE THE SHEEPHOOD OF THE BELIEVER?

In the New Testament the word "sheep" is used approximately twenty-two times as pertaining to God's children.

In the New Testament the word "son," "son," or "children" denotes the sons of God or the children of God fifty-six times.

In the New Testament the word "heirs" pertains to the heirs of the kingdom or heirs of salvation, etc., thirteen times.

The word "saints" is applied to God's children sixty times. This is to say nothing of the many times they are called "king," "priest," a "conqueror," "overcomer," "brethren," etc.

I believe the "sheep-herders" loose out.

To overemphasize the characteristics of a sheep is to destroy the greater truth of the Word of God. There is something in the Word about rightly dividing the word of truth.

NEO-DISCIPLESHP TEACHES THAT THE LORD SPEAKS TO THE SHEEP ONLY THROUGH THE SHEPHERD.

"God will speak through your shepherd when He wants to tell you something is a cardinal principle of these men."

This is part truth. The Lord does put His Words into another man's mouth and speaks to the saints. Lk. 10:16 says: "He that heareth you heareth me." 1 Pet. 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. . . ." The teaching in Peter isn't limited to shepherds, but it is a word to all saints of all ages.

God will use a shepherd to speak the Word of the Lord to the sheep. He will, also, use the sheep to speak the Word of the Lord to the shepherds.

If you can hear the voice of God only through the shepherd, then you are limited by the wisdom of that shepherd. You are at the mercies of that shepherd. If this principle were practiced in the Baptist church, not another person would receive the Holy Ghost. If this principle were followed in other churches, not a one of them, except a few rebels, would go further in the Lord.

May God's children shake themselves from this snare that is coming upon them.

**WHO IS THE PASTOR OF THE SHEEP WHO
SUBMIT TO THE NEO-DISCIPLES
PROGRAMS?**

At one time Charles Simpson admitted that he had about forty people submitted to him. They recognized him as their shepherd even though they did not go to the same church.

One pastor from Houston attended a shepherd meeting and found one of his sheep there. He asked the question, "Who is the shepherd of this sheep, you or I?" It took them thirty minutes of beating around the bush to try to answer his question. He said again, "But who is the shepherd in the final show down?" They finally admitted that it was not the pastor. The shepherd over here in this neo-discipleship situation claimed authority over the sheep.

Now, if you want confusion just get linked in a mess like that. Here was a fine Spirit-filled pastor trying to lead his folks forward, and here was another system taking authority over his sheep.

I ask you to examine yourself. What makes you want to become a part of a situation which causes such utter chaos and confusion in the Body of Christ?

CHAPTER 2

WHAT SAITH THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING NEO-DISCIPLESHP?

The new approach to discipleship is to put shepherds over small groups. The number will vary with the particular man who starts the group.

This man is called the shepherd. He operates with all authority. He uses this authority to mold the lives of those under him.

The general aim is to produce more like himself. The thought behind this is that the shepherd hears from the Lord and acts as a "pope" or mediator for the sheep under him.

All guidance comes to the sheep through the shepherd.

In this area we will deal with many scriptures pertaining to Discipleship, Pro and Con.

This new discipleship program has some good points . . . I will mention a few as I go along, but since I am mostly exposing the error of this movement, I will not deal with its good points in detail.

In the new discipleship program strong

emphasis is placed on following the shepherd. The shepherd is submitted to someone over him. It is a chain of command.

DID PAUL TEACH MEN TO FOLLOW HIM?

1 Thes. 1:6: *"Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord . . ."*

Eph. 5:1: *"Be ye followers of God, as dear children . . ."*

Gal. 4:12: *"Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all."*

Paul gave them exhortation to follow him and the Lord. It gave them a breather. Then he strongly exhorted them to follow God. In Galatians, Paul beseeches them to be as he is.

In each case it was not a command. It was an exhortation. Neo-discipleship groups usually operate on the command and strong authoritarian basis. If Paul had had a command system in operation there would have been no need for pleading, etc., in the book of Galatians. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you . . ." "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth . . ." "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Had there been a strong dictatorial type system set up there would have been none of this exhorting and preaching. He would have

written to the main, or chief "Head knocker," and commanded him to straighten up and mold those slaves into the image of Paul.

DID THE APOSTLES HAVE AUTHORITY IN THE CONGREGATIONS UNDER THEM?

First, let me say that the churches which Paul started were only loosely connected to him. He had to write to some of them to prove his apostleship over them. He didn't leave them in a "strait jacket" program.

2 Cor. 12:11-13: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong."

2 Cor. 11:4: "If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

2 Cor. 13:3: "Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me."

2 Cor. 11:8: "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you a service."

Paul had ministered to them and received, or took, no offerings. He had given his life for them so to speak, yet they rejected him. They demanded that he prove himself worthy of the ministry or apostleship that he claimed among them.

If Paul had set up a rigidly authoritarian system as is promoted by shepherds or sheepfold teachers today, there would have been no need for such statements as those here.

They actually demanded proof from Paul that he was speaking the Word of the Lord.

2 Cor. 13:2: "I told you before, and foretell you . . . if I come I will not spare."

2 Cor. 13:10: "I write these things being absent, lest being present, I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction."

Paul had authority, but if there had been any local authority, such as shepherds, "lording" it over the sheep, Paul would not have written to them in this manner. He would merely have written the head shepherd over the group in that area.

Notice that Paul had to tell them twice in this case. He did not have absolute dictatorial type submission in operation.

2 Cor. 10:1-2: "I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among

you, but being absent am bold toward you . . ."

Paul had authority. Every shepherd or apostle must have authority, but he must not overstep this authority.

There must be a balance.

A person must be allowed to make decisions. Through trial and error the babe learns to walk.

YES, PAUL DID HAVE AUTHORITY, BUT IT WAS NOT ADMINISTERED IN A MANNER TO DESTROY THE WILL OF THE CHURCH OR SAINTS.

2 Cor. 13:2: "I have told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare."

These are words of authority, but taken in the light of the surrounding scriptures, they were not given in the spirit of dictatorship or absolute authority.

God's ministers must have authority. It is an authority of love; it is not an absolute authority which demands absolute obedience. Men are prone to make mistakes. A man must be free to find God for himself.

Tit. 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city . . ."

Authority is seen here. It was an authority of setting things in order in the church structure. It included placing God's men in the Body. It did not entail going home with the saints and becoming the voice of God to them.

Tit. 2:15: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority . . ."

They were dealing with temperance, faith, love, patience, and holiness. A minister has the right to preach with authority, but the individual must, also, have the right to choose whether or not to put it to work in his life.

THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS WERE SPIRIT-LED, NOT SHEPHERD-DOMINATED.]

Acts 16:6 & 9: "When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, A vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, come over into Macedonia, and help us."

Rom. 8:14 tells you to be spirit-led rather than shepherd-dominated.

Here in Acts, Paul was divinely guided directly by the Holy Ghost.

According to the "submitted body" groups, Paul would have had to check with Peter, or the shepherd, or apostle over him.

Gal. 2:1-2: "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas . . . I went up by revelation . . ."

God directed Paul. Who is directing you?
WAS THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITTEN TO
BELIEVERS OR TO SHEPHERDS?

Phil. 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

Rom. 1:7: "To all that be in Rome . . ."

1 Cor. 1:2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints . . ."

According to neo-discipleship and shepherd teachings the sheep are dumb and cannot receive direction from God. If that were the case, these letters should have been directed to the shepherds. This wasn't the case. The Lord directed His Word to all of the Saints. In a few cases, the letters were addressed to the saints, and bishops, and deacons.

**SHEPHERD PROGRAMS PROMOTE
"SUBMITTED BODIES."**

In "submitted bodies" each submits to someone above him. The shepherd has the sheep under him, submitted totally to him. He in turn is submitted to the one over him. There is no room for argument, etc.

We don't find such conditions existing in the Word of God.

Acts 15:7: "When there had been much disputing . . ."

This was a meeting of the apostles and elders. They argued and disputed.

IN "SUBMITTED BODIES" THE SHEPHERD OVER YOU MAKES THE DECISIONS FOR YOUR LIFE.

This was not followed in the New Testament at all.

Acts 15:34: *"Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still."*

Acts 15:39: *"The contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other."*

In each of these cases individuals expressed their wills. They showed signs of individualism. They were not submitting totally to the one above them.

1 Cor. 3:10: *"... I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."*

There is no sign of submitted bodies here. It was an exhortation on Paul's part for those who followed him to take heed. He did not appoint men to follow him in the full sense of the Word. God sent men to minister.

IN SUBMITTED BODIES THE SHEEP NEVER TELL THE SHEPHERD ANYTHING.

Again, the New Testament does not honor such nonsense.

Acts 21:4: *"And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul*

through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem."

Here the disciples or sheep were telling Paul rather than Paul telling them.

DID THE NEW TESTAMENT HAVE "SUBMITTED BODIES"?

1 Cor. 3:5-7: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believe, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

There is no stair step authority manifested here. This says that the ministers are nothing. It is God who really counts. The ministers lead you to Christ. They water the flock, but it is God who really gets the job done.

Paul said stop magnifying men. You have the same thing that they have. You get with it and produce for the Lord.

Gal. 2:6: "These who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me."

No, this isn't the picture of a "submitted body". Paul didn't even recognize who the leaders were. He said some seemed to be

somewhat in conference. God didn't pay attention to those who thought they had a little authority. Paul did not recognize them.

Gal. 2:11: "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

"Submitted body" teaching is foreign to the Word of God. Paul said I withstood Peter to the face because he was in error. In "submitted body" teaching you cannot come against those higher than you are. Peter would have been higher than Paul because Paul came in much farther down the line. Paul recognized none of this nonsense.

**MODERN DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS
BOAST OF MAKING DISCIPLES UNTO
THEMSELVES.**

Acts 20:30: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Note that they come from among the brethren.

Baalam was a false prophet. Many of his prophecies were right on target, but his counsel was bad. He encouraged the saints to intermarry with the enemy. This made him a false prophet.

**GOD'S WORD STRONGLY EMPHASIZES
THAT YOU BELONG TO JESUS, NOT MAN.**

1 Cor. 7:23: "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men."

THE NEW TESTAMENT GIVES YOU ROOM TO MAKE DECISIONS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE MAN OVER YOU.

1 Cor. 16:12: *"As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren, but his will was not at all to come at this time, but he will come when he shall have convenient time."*

Paul did not force the man to obey him. Paul wanted him to come at that time, but Apollos did not wish to come at that time. God made an individual out of him. There must be room for a man to obey God regardless of those with whom he is working.

THE APOSTLES EXERCISED THEIR AUTHORITY IN GENTLENESS.

1 Thes. 2:7: *"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."*

ONLY SLAVES WERE COMMANDED TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEIR MASTERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Tit. 2:9: *"Exhort servants (slaves) to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again."*

CAN ONE BE INDEPENDENT OF THE MAIN BODY AND STILL BE USED OF GOD?

The shepherd concept says absolutely not. They condemn such action.

Mk. 9:38-39: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me."

The Bible teaches that individuals are to flow together in a Body that is loosely knit together with the cords of love.

Col. 3:14: "Above all things put on charity, (love) which is the bond of perfectness."

Col. 2:2: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love."

JESUS DID NOT TEACH MEN TO GO THROUGH SHEPHERDS TO GET TO THE SHEEP.

Shepherd and/or neo-discipleship leaders teach that you must always deal with the shepherd before going to the sheep. Jesus spoke against this action.

Matt. 18:15-17: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church . . ."

This doesn't hint of a shepherd solving

problems for the sheep. It was brother dealing with brother, and finally, if need be, the entire church had to become involved in the matter.

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH THAT CHRISTIANS ARE DUMB SHEEP WHO CANNOT MAKE DECISIONS ON THEIR OWN?

No! The Bible teaches the saints are to be spirit-led. (Rom. 8:14) (Jn. 14:26)

1 John 2:27: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

This was written to the little children in the Lord. God's sheep are also kings, sons, joint-heirs with Jesus, the bride of Christ and more than conquerors.

SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS ON COMMUNAL LIVING

In Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:34 it is mentioned that they sold their possessions and houses. The money was given to the apostles to distribute to the needs. It was not given to them to put in their own pockets. Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

This was not always the case. All through Acts and especially in the Jerusalem area where this was taking place, they still maintained their homes. It speaks of them

going from house to house. Perhaps it was extra lands and extra houses that they sold. This is not known for sure, but it is evident that communal living was not the order of the day.

From the book of Acts on through the epistles of John the word "house" is mentioned approximately forty-three times in reference to a man's household or his physical home.

Throughout the entire Word of God the individual family is emphasized. Anything that tends to destroy the home is anti-Bible. In discipleship groups there is a tendency to put the home of the Christian at the disposal of the shepherd. This may not be true in every case, but it is a basic teaching that is not entirely Christ-like in nature.

WERE WOMEN RECOGNIZED AS LEADERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?

Yes.

Rom. 16:1: *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea. That you receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself."*

This woman had a ministry in the church outside of her home.

Acts 16:3: *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus."*

Both man and wife were considered by Paul to be a leader and a personal helper.

Acts 16:14: *"A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened . . ."*

Lydia was a business woman. She was active outside her home, also.

The duty of a wife is first to the husband and children at home. However, God does lead women in individual cases to become involved in matters other than the home.

THE BELIEVER IS EQUAL TO THE SHEPHERD IN THE EYES OF GOD.

Jesus said in Mk. 16:20 that believers would do miracles, speak in tongues, lay hands on the sick, etc.

Jesus taught in Jn. 14:12 that believers would do the same works that He did.

In 1 John 4:17 it states that the believer is as Jesus. "As he is so are we in this world."

In 1 Cor. 3:21-22 Paul exhorts them to stop glorying in the men who were shepherds over the people and develop their own ministry. "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas . . . all things are yours."

Eph. 2:5-6 teaches that the believer is seated together with Christ in heavenly places. He is one with Christ.

In Lk. 6:20 Jesus teaches the disciple to be as He was in life and ministry.

Every believer is equal in the sense of position. God places undershepherds over the flocks to love, guide, and encourage. In no way are these shepherds to act as lords over these saints. Some saints are capable of going beyond their shepherd. Many times the shepherd lacks vision. God's children must follow God and not a shepherd who may be in error or limited in vision.

ACCORDING TO SHEPHERD THEORY YOU MUST DENY YOUR ABILITY TO LEAD YOURSELF.

This theory interprets Jesus' command to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him to mean "Deny your own ability to lead yourself under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit."

John 16:13 teaches that the Holy Spirit will guide you, not just your shepherd, into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ."

SHEPHERDS EMPHASIZE THAT RELATING TO MEN OF LIKE DOCTRINE IS THE BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP.

Shepherd teachers speak of being joined to people who are joined to the same people of like faith. They say that when you are joined to the same shepherd, who in turn is joined to other shepherds of like order, then you are joined to each other.

They acknowledge that Jesus is the Savior and believers love one another because of

Jesus. Then they turn around and say that you cannot be joined, or related, unless you are joined to others of like doctrine or shepherd structure.

1 Cor. 6:17: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

Believers are joined to Jesus. The spirit of Jesus joins the believers to each other, not doctrines, shepherds, or anything else. The Holy Spirit makes us all one.

If you are one in Jesus you can fellowship with another believer who is submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD IS YOUR COVERING.

One neo-discipleship teacher insists that you call your shepherd when you are going on vacation in order that you may be covered while on vacation. His covering, authority, and spirit are supposed to be a protection for you.

Ps. 91:1 teaches differently. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow (or covering) of the Almighty." Read Is 30:1.

Only God can cover you on vacation. Your shepherd is only human. He cannot take the place of the Lord.

You had better make sure that you are giving the Chief Shepherd a good feeling rather than being so out of balance on human shepherd worship.

SCRIPTURAL TITHING

2 Cor. 11:8: "I have robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service."

2 Cor. 11:7: "I preached to you the gospel of God freely."

2 Cor. 11:9: "I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensom unto you, and so will I keep myself."

Paul did not always teach in this manner, but never did he teach that the pastor or shepherd should receive the tithe. The tithe went to the church and the church used it as it was needed. This cannot be taken legalistically since God may lead some to give directly to a ministry, just as the brethren from Macedonia. (Phil. 4:15-18)

1 Cor. 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

The church was to send some individual along with Paul to take this money to the saints in Jerusalem. This was a special love offering for needy ones there, but it was handled by the church.

1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

The picture here is that of several elders with different ministries within the church. The church was to minister in financial matters especially to the ones who were in charge of teaching the Word of God.

In 2 Chr. 31:5-11 the people brought the tithe of their things and laid them in heaps. Hezekiah commanded that they make storage bins for them. This indicated community receipt of the tithes. It was not individual.

Neh. 13:12: "Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries."

This indicates a central receiving place, rather than individual.

Mal. 3:10: "Bring ye all the tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house . . ."

It is also true that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. (Gen. 14:20.)

In the New Testament there is a flow. It is not a legalistic approach of giving or not giving to the pastor directly or through the church. It is how God leads in a particular group.

Some new churches start by giving the pastor the tithe until the church grows. When the group is strong enough, the pastor usually

requests that the church begin to keep a part of the tithe for other needs in the church.

To legalistically set up tithing rules that the shepherd receives the tithe and the church can go fly a kite is a picture of greed and disregard for the needs of the greater flock of God.

Some of God's churches and pastors have been here a long time. They are doing a fine job. For men to come and steal sheep out of these churches and demand that the tithe come to them is the height of greed and disrespect for the Body of Christ. Sometimes, the individual shepherds give the saints under their control permission to continue giving to their local churches if they are active there.

IN NEO-DISCIPLESHP PROGRAMS THERE IS A PYRAMID SYSTEM OF TITHING.

Each shepherd is to receive the tithes of the individuals under him. He, in turn, is submitted to another shepherd over him. He is to pay tithes to that person. It just keeps adding up.

This is not the way it operates in all cases.

Some of the systems stop the tithe at a given point and do not send it any further but use it as they see fit.

A MINISTER WHO MUST RULE IS A SICK PERSON.

Jesus recognized the authoritarian spirit in His disciples, especially Peter. The disciples had argued once on the road as to who would be the greatest. Jesus later instructed them that the greatest must be the servant of all.

Peter had a strongly authoritarian spirit deep within him.

Jesus broke this authoritarian spirit just before His crucifixion. He knew that if He didn't break that spirit in Peter, the church would never be launched. There never would have been a book of Acts.

To break this authoritarian spirit Jesus began to wash their feet. He took the place of a servant.

He came to Peter to wash his feet.

"Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? . . . Thou shalt never wash my feet . . ." (Jn. 13:7-8)

Peter knew that servants alone washed feet.

Peter would have been glad to wash Jesus' feet for he recognized Jesus to be his leader.

Peter did not expect the leader to do any menial task.

" . . . Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." (Jn. 13:9)

When there is a strongly authoritarian pattern seen in any group, there should be warning bells going off in your spirit.

Something must be seriously wrong.

BIBLE TEACHING ON DISCIPLES WITHOUT SHEPHERDS

Acts 14:22-23: *"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue . . . and when they had ordained them elders in every church . . ."*

These disciples were alone without an apostle or shepherd, but they were disciples. The elders were appointed months or years later. The apostles who started the work were miles and miles away in the meantime. They had no one to turn to but the Lord. The shepherds were appointed in the church and not over individual sheep.

A TESTIMONY ABOUT SHEEP

One brother recently came to me and said, "I use to care for sheep." He went on to relate to me how that the sheepfold literally stinks. He said that once a flock of sheep has been in a place for a day or so, you can still smell that horrible odor a year or so later.

This sheepfold business will soon begin to smell worse than it does now if it isn't corrected.

Anything, that screens out the move of God and only allows what some narrow minded doctrine permits, soon smells. It stinks.

CHAPTER 3

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP FORMS LIVES BY THE WORD OF GOD.

The Word of God is spirit and life. Jn. 6:63.

The Word of God is like finding a great treasure. Ps. 119:162.

The Word of God will bring life to you in all areas.

"... Quicken me according to thy word." Ps. 119:154.

The Word speaks of forgiveness and healing. Ps. 103:3-5.

The man of God can cry out, "Lord, quicken or make me to live according to the standards found in Your Word. Heal me. Deliver me. Save me. Forgive me. Prosper me."

A TRUE DISCIPLE WILL RECOGNIZE THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD.

Heb. 4:12-13: "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the hearts."

The Word of God is quick (alive). It is all powerful. It is sharper than a sword sharpened on both sides.

The Word is alive with the life of God.

The Word is Jesus.

Heb. 4:13: *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

The Word has eyes. It is the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit of Jesus has personality and life just as Jesus Himself.

Heb. 4:14: *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God . . ."*

Now the Word that we read and study which is the Spirit of God becomes Christ Himself in heaven. John 1 speaks of the Word of God being Jesus.

John 1:14: *"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . ."*

In Jn. 1:1-3 it speaks of this same Word as being with God in eternity and even a part of the Godhead which created the world.

In Rev. 19:13 Jesus is named the Word of God.

The Word of God is alive with God. True discipleship will not call the Word a "help" in discipleship. This is a subtle blow of Satan. The Word of God is a "must" in discipleship.

A DISCIPLE MUST MEDITATE THE WORD OF GOD INTO HIS SPIRIT.

Josh. 1:8: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Success comes by walking in the Word of God.

It is fun to live half hungry much of the time. Your flesh seems to back down from its place of pre-eminence. Jesus is activated in your life. The anointing flows easily. Praying in the Spirit just flows and flows like a mighty generator creating power from the hidden resources of the spirit.

It is in this atmosphere that you must learn to meditate the Word of God into your spirit. It will then become a part of your life.

Ps. 1:2-3: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Life flows into the individual as he learns the secret of feeding the living Word of God into his spirit.

Sitting around getting close to other disciples is not the real basis of discipleship.

Discussing and magnifying the weakness of any individual does not create victory. It often causes the individual to become weakness conscious rather than Christ and victory conscious.

The emphasis on the negative is demon consciousness rather than Christ consciousness.

GOD UPHOLDS EVERYTHING BY HIS WORD.

Heb. 1:3: "... Upholding all things by the word of his power . . ."

Heb. 11:3: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God . . ."

Ps. 33:6 and 9: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

God used the living spirit breath of God to create the worlds. He spoke the world into existence. The worlds were framed by His Word. He holds the heavens and the earth now by His Word.

This Word is a sharp sword. It heals. It prospers. It creates. This Word is in your life if you will meditate it into your spirit.

This Word in you will deliver.

It will prosper you.

It will make a real disciple out of you.

Neo-discipleship programs often (not always) make light of Bible studies. This was mentioned earlier in the book. Some Bible studies may be dead if the teacher or minister is dead. Let this living Word bring life to the teacher or pastor, and no Bible study will be dead again. There is life in the Word.

FAITH COMES TO THE DISCIPLE THROUGH THE WORD.

Rom. 10:17: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The apostles doctrine was the Word of God.

The only basis of discipleship is the precious Word of God.

The Word is the life of God. Jesus is in the Word. Put the Word into your life, and faith flows.

Acts 20:32: "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

It is this living Word that builds the life of Christ into you. This living Word will make you like Peter and Paul. It will make you like Jesus. It will give you an inheritance with those who are sanctified.

Jn. 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me . . . I will love him and manifest myself to him."

The Word of God in the saint causes him to love the Lord.

It causes him to open up to the revelations of the Lord.

Now the Lord manifests Himself to the believer.

John 14:23: ". . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It is through the living Word of God coming into the disciple that the full impact of the Godhead begins to dwell in the disciple.

You become God possessed as the Word takes over in you.

You don't need a shepherd breathing down your neck to make decisions for you. You have the Chief Shepherd inside whispering directions to you.

The neo-discipleship program destroys the real faith life.

The fundamental doctrine of the Bible is Christ in you. He is not in you for someone else to tell you how to move. He is in you so that He can tell you how to move into His likeness.

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP LEARNS TO TAKE A WORD BREAK.

1 Pet. 2:2: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

The Christian becomes Christ-like as he learns to hunger after the Word of the Lord. He realizes that just as a new born babe drinks milk every two or three hours, likewise he must slip away every two or three hours to read a verse or two of God's Word into his mind and spirit. This Word will carry his spirit on for a few hours until his next Word break.

The neo-discipleship program, on the contrary, insists that God gives the words for the disciple through the shepherd. The poor old saint has to wait all day until he can call or get with his shepherd for a word. He is too naive or stupid to get one for himself. May God forgive the shepherds who teach such folly.

May God forgive the saints who are falling for such nonsense.

If you were to ask the groups caught up in the neo-discipleship if they believed the Word, they would certainly answer in the affirmative.

If you were to ask them if they thought one should read the Word of God, they would answer yes, but they turn right around and say that God speaks to you only through the shepherd. The sheep is too naive to follow his own judgments. He is too stupid to operate on his own.

If this is true, then he cannot read the Word on his own. He cannot make any decisions on his own.

Neo-discipleship teachings are inconsistent and confusing.

THE BASIS FOR TRUE DISCIPLESHIP IS ACTING ON THE WORD.

In Ps. 1 the believer meditates on the Word and then he becomes a success. Whatever he does prospers.

In Joshua 1:8 the believer meditates the Word of God into his spirit until he makes himself a success. This man prospers by acting upon the Word of God.

In Lk. 5:5 Peter had fished all night. He had failed. He had not taken one fish, yet when he acted upon the Word of the Lord a miracle was born.

“ . . . Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at *thy* word I will let down the net.”

Peter obeyed the voice of Jesus. He disregarded his natural senses. He let down the net. “And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes . . .”

Obedience to the Word of God creates miracles for you. It is as you learn to obey God's Word that you, too, will see miracles in your life.

True discipleship walks in the Word of God. It acts upon the Word of God.

GOD'S WORD WILL ALWAYS SUCCEED.

Is. 55:11: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.”

God's Word will build life into the disciple. It will build Jesus into him. It will prosper in his life. Any discipleship program that is based on psycho-analysis or group therapy will miss the mark.

The true program will be based on God's Word, not the word of a human being.

CHAPTER 4

FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP WILL BE BASED ON FAITH IN JESUS.

Heb. 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ."

He started our life. He set the example. He led forth for us. He will finish it.

Do not trust men as a foundation.

The foundation must be Jesus Christ.

FAITH OPERATES IN LOVE.

1 John 4:12: "... If we love one another, God dwelleth in us . . ."

Discipleship then is created by the love of God flowing out to others. It is then that God takes over in your life.

1 John 4:16: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

There is a God-take-over in your life when love is allowed to flow.

When God takes over, faith is released. Christ begins to live your life. Paul said that Christ lived in him. If Christ is alive in you, His

spiritual radar system will give you guidance. A true disciple can be encouraged and admonished by the shepherd, but never should a true disciple rely entirely upon the shepherd.

Love releases true faith.

Gal. 5:6: *" . . . Faith which worketh by love."*

The emphasis then is upon love. As you move in love you will move in faith. The faith-life or Christ-life operates through the spirit and not through dogmas.

JESUS MOVED WITH LOVE AND HEALED THE NEEDY.

Mk. 1:40-41: *"There came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean."*

The love of God flowed through Jesus' life. It healed the leper.

Matt. 14:14: *" . . . He saw the great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."*

John Osteen had prayed for a blind boy. He was blind in one eye. A day or so later, he was moved with great compassion for the lad. His heart nearly broke in love and compassion for the child so he drove to the house where the lad lived. The boy came bouncing out of the

house saying, "Brother Osteen, the Lord just healed my eye."

Brother Osteen was praying for a child with a twisted foot in Mexico. His heart began to release the compassion of Jesus. He thought of his own child whom the Lord had healed. As this love was flowing, healing miracles began to flow. The child's foot straightened up even while he held it in his hands.

Praise ye the Lord.

Brother Billy Branham was moved with so much compassion for a killer bull which was charging him that all fear left him. "Perfect love casteth out fear." The faster the bull charged him, the more he loved him. When the bull was within fifteen feet of this love, the love and compassion of Jesus flowed out to the bull. It knocked him down, and he came skidding up to Brother Branham's feet.

Praise the name of Jesus.

DEVELOP A LOVE LIFE.

This is true discipleship.

John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Is this what neo-discipleship groups are creating?

In my experience, it is not.

People who disagree with them are called "Rebels."

Great divisions are coming to the Body of Christ over the doctrines being taught by these groups.

Some Full Gospel Business Men's groups have been closed as a direct fruit of this ministry.

Some discipleship groups are commanding their subjects to stay away from Full Gospel Business Men's groups and other similar meetings.

Some of the saints write to me saying that they are being persecuted by extremists of the discipleship groups who insist that they join their way of thinking.

Love is not the distinguishing characteristic of this ministry even though there is love flowing within the individual cell groups, etc.

The saints who are becoming involved in discipleship love the Lord. They hunger for more of Jesus. This looks good to them on the surface. Naturally there is going to be love flowing in their midst. These people are lovers.

This love will eventually be squashed in these legalistic groups. It has always been so. When men's programs replace the Spirit of God, the fruit of the flesh finally manifests itself.

For a clear picture look at the history of many denominations today. They started out with love. As the spirit of the program began to

take over, the love of Jesus was pushed more and more to one side.

HOW TO DEVELOP A LOVE-LIFE IN THE BELIEVER

Determine that you are a lover. Stop identifying with your failure to love. Determine that you will walk out in love today. Stand before the mirror and tell yourself that you are a lover.

Forgive yourself when you fail. Get up and start over again.

Determine that you will love people about you. Tell yourself that you will love others. Love people who do you wrong. If you fail and lose your "cool", repent and quickly identify with the love-life. Be quick to apologize. Be quick to forgive yourself as well as others.

Love the people with whom you work. Love the clerks in the stores. Love your family. Step forth in Jesus' love.

Constantly identify with love. Constantly tell yourself that you can love.

2 Cor. 9:10 says that, "He ministereth seed to the sower . . ."

God will minister more love to the man who gives love.

Pray for love. Then step out by faith and minister love.

It is as you become a doer of the Word, discipleship is developed.

FAITH BELIEVES GOD NOW.

Heb. 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Stand and confess your healing now.

Confess your deliverance now.

Confess your prosperity now.

Put a cushion in it. Remember faith is now. The actual thing prayed for may arrive ten years later.

Heb. 10:36: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

Abraham waited approximately twenty years or more before he received the promised child.

Moses waited approximately forty years in the desert after he fled from the king of Egypt. He knew in his spirit that God would use him to deliver his people.

Joseph dreamed that his family would bow down to him. It was years later before this actually happened.

Isaiah prophesied many things that did not take place during his lifetime. Many of the things which Isaiah prophesied still haven't happened.

At God's command David was anointed by Samuel to be king. He did not actually become king until years later following the death of Saul.

Believe now that God has healed you.

Believe now that it is settled. Patience will deliver what God has ordered.

Patience is the conveyer belt that delivers what faith has ordered.

Keep the cushion in there realizing that God is sovereign. Some things that you will confess or try to believe God for may not be His will until other things are corrected.

God could not hear Israel because they were caught up with idolatry.

Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

God had dealt with them and dealt with them. He pleaded with them. Over the years they grew so hard against the Lord that He said, "Let them alone."

Josiah tried to bring a reformation to Judah, the southern kingdom, but God could not honor his request. They had built up so much evil that God could not turn them back.

There may be reasons why God cannot do some things in the lives of some people. You must be positive. You must believe God. Confess and forsake any known sin. Hang in there. God will bring you through. If there is a reason for blockage of faith, expect the Lord will reveal it.

Stay in there with a positive attitude. Faith takes it now. Patience delivers it in God's time.

Ps. 27:13: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

David was about to go under, faint. Then he realized that, to get the victory, he must believe now and expect God to deliver it in His time. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (vs. 14)

You believe it now. Then wait till the manifestation comes.

Jn. 11:40: "... If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God."

Believe it regardless of the circumstances is what Jesus told Martha. Lazarus had been dead four days. Circumstances said that it was beyond hope. Jesus told her to believe.

This doesn't give you the authority to believe for the raising of every dead person. It does give you the authority to believe when the Lord drops faith in your heart in any particular situation. Some things are automatic. You just believe because it is the will of God. In other things, you must find the will of God.

Mk. 11:24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Some things are manifested immediately when you believe. Others follow years later. Walk home with it the moment you believe.

One lady said she stood crying at a bus stop because she did not get prayed for at church that night. For one reason or another they did not get around to praying for her. The man

standing next to her learned why she was crying.

He said, "Lady, would you like for me to pray for you?"

"Can you pray?" she asked.

"Certainly," came the answer.

"Walk!" Came the sharp command followed by one big shove. The dear sister lit face first in a mud puddle. The man quickly picked her up and before she knew what was happening, he again commanded her to walk and gave her another shove.

This time she decided to believe or get her neck broken.

She has been walking now for 30 years. Hallelujah. Faith believes now.

In John 20:25-29 Jesus appeared to the disciples. Thomas was not present. Thomas did not believe because he did not see. He said that if he could see then he would believe. Jesus came to them again. He immediately went to Thomas and said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered . . . My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Thomas, like many today had to see or feel something. Jesus in His mercy lets some people like Thomas get feelings from time to

time. This is great, but the real faith-life comes from believing without sight or feeling. Learn to walk because the Word has declared it to be so.

FAITH GETS A BULL DOG GRIP ON GOD AND REFUSES TO TURN LOOSE.

Gen. 32:24-26: "Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. When he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

The Lord, through an angel, locked in a struggle with Jacob. Jacob had a wicked nature. His name meant thief, crook, etc; yet God called him and began to work with him to change his life into a blessing.

Jacob began to respond and determined that God would bless him and change his life. He was sick of being a failure and a self centered man. The angel was about to leave before the final break through came. Jacob said, "No, I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Jacob locked in. He would not turn loose. It cost him. He limped the rest of his life on that leg where God inflicted a wound.

Gen. 32:31-32: "And he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat

not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh . . . because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."

Don't say that God can't. He can do anything.

Jacob received his blessing. His name was changed to Israel, father or prince.

Hang in there. Pay the price. Break through. Your ministry shall be manifesting itself. Refuse to be living your life out in failure and unbelief.

God's children were not meant to be defeated. Arise now in Jesus' name and do exploits.

Matt. 15:22-26 tells the story of a woman who came to Jesus for help. It seemed that He ignored her completely. The disciples wanted to run her off. She could not be run off. She could not be insulted. Jesus called her a "Gentile Dog." This did not insult her.

She said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the masters table." This touched the heart of Jesus. He said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt . . ."

Refuse to be denied. Get a bull dog grip on the Lord. Hold fast your confession. God is faithful.

Mk. 10:46-51 gives the story of blind Bartimaeus who received his sight. He cried out to Jesus, but for reasons unknown, his faith

did not release. He kept crying out. He yelled so much that many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he continued to cry more and more, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me."

Finally his cry broke into the faith realm.

Jesus heard that cry of faith and delivered him from his blindness.

Heb. 11:6: "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

God has a faith operation. Those who break through to faith will come forth with their sight. There is victory for the person who will get a bull dog grip on faith.

God sometimes holds out until the real faith bursts forth through the problems and turmoils. Don't give up. Hang in there.

DISCIPLESHIP FAITH ACTS

James 2:20: ". . . Faith without works is dead."

James 2:22: ". . . By words was faith made perfect."

James 2:24: ". . . By works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Faith has to have works or action. Peter had to step out on the water before he had a miracle.

In 2 Kings 4:1-6 the widow woman had to borrow pans and take her own oil and begin to pour it out into the borrowed containers before she received a miracle.

In Ex. 14:15-16 Moses had to "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." He had to lift up his rod, stretch out his hand over the sea, and divide it.

All of this was action or works. They believed God. They acted their faith. God then gave the miracles.

In discipleship there must be a standing on the promise; then there must be an action. Act like the Lord has heard your faith cry.

In discipleship one must move forward by faith and works.

Peter said in Acts 3:6 "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." The man did not receive evidence of his healing so Peter "took him by the right hand and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." It was then that he was able to "leap up and walk, and go walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Many times you will have to step out and enter new walks by faith with no evidence other than a gentle nudge.

If you find you are missing God, be big enough to acknowledge that you made a mistake. Change your course or alter it as needed.

CHAPTER 5

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS TO BE FORMED IN EACH DISCIPLE

Gal. 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Any true discipleship program must include this aspect of the Gospel.

The Lord desires that each individual believer mature.

It is true that some believers are in different talent areas. Matt. 25 speaks of some having five, some two, and some one. Each man is given according to his ability. God is in control of this.

2 Cor. 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

You are to come into His life. He has made you to become the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

You now can stand before the Father in the righteousness of Jesus.

The very wisdom of God abides in you.

1 Cor. 1:30: *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*

You are not a dumb sheep.

You have the wisdom of God in you.

True, this wisdom may not be flowing. It flows as you confess and believe it.

It will never flow if you permit shepherds to make your decisions for you.

It will never flow if you confess that you are a dumb sheep.

DISCIPLES ARE TO BE CONFORMED TO THE VERY IMAGE OF THE SON.

Ep. 5:1: *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us . . ."*

You are to follow God.

You do have the ability to follow God, or He would not have said so.

He didn't say, "Now ye shepherds make your sheep submit and follow me."

No, he said, "You follow me."

You are to imitate Jesus.

You are to walk in love even as Christ also has loved you.

He even told you to do what Jesus did. This doesn't limit you to a shepherd. The one you are to imitate and follow is Jesus.

Rom. 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

You are predestined to be like Jesus.

You were not told to be like your shepherd.

Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren.

You are to be like Jesus. Hallelujah!

Jesus showed the world what the Father expects out of sons.

Get your eyes on the Lord and not on man or shepherds.

Lk. 6:40: "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."

Jesus washed feet; so you wash feet.

Jesus did nothing but what He saw the Father do. (John 5:19)

You do nothing but what you see the Father do. You are to be spirit-led yourself. Come alive, little saint, to your responsibilities. Stop this "cop out." You have a responsibility to grow up. You must make some decisions on your own. Stop following shepherds.

An undershepherd is to love and counsel you. He is to advise you. He must never become your daddy. You must learn to make decisions on your own.

Eph. 4:11-13: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangel-

ists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

God expects you to grow up into His likeness.

He expects you to come to the knowledge of the Son of God.

Yes, you can hear from God. You are not just a dumb naive sheep. You are God's precious child. He expects you to grow. He expects you to look to Him for guidance. You must not be smothered by a submission program where the shepherd gets the word of God for you. You must realize that you can tune in on the same frequency that any shepherd can. He is no higher in God than you are, dear one.

2 Pet. 1:19 "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

The day star is Jesus. He is to come alive in your heart.

What is He coming alive in your heart to do?

He is going to come alive to live His life in you.

A program of super-submission to the

undershepherd will stop the day star from coming alive in your heart.

You don't need Jesus because you have your shepherd.

Stop this foolishness. Jesus wants to come alive in you. He wants to live His life in you. It is not the life of the shepherd which is to be developed in you. It is the life of Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd, which is to live in you.

Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Jesus wants to come alive in your heart, also. He wants to live His life in you.

The shepherd program of neo-discipleship will stunt your growth. Jesus cannot live fully through you if you are constantly leaning on a shepherd for your help. The shepherd takes Jesus' place. You have developed a false god. This is a subtle spirit, but in the neo-disciple program the shepherd is your god.

Col. 2:7: "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith . . ."

What does this say? Is the life of the shepherd to be duplicated in you, or is it the life of Jesus that is to come alive in you?

You are to be rooted and built up into Jesus Christ.

You are to smell like Jesus.

You are to walk like Jesus.

You are to pray like Jesus.

You are to be spirit-led like Jesus.

The life of Christ is to take over in you.

**CHRIST IS FORMED IN DISCIPLES
THROUGH HIS WORD.**

Eph. 4:15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

As you walk and speak God's truth in love, then you grow up into Jesus Christ. You mature into His likeness. You are someone very special. Arise, little one, and do exploits. You are not so little in Jesus; you are a king. You are an overcomer. Smile, God loves you today.

Go forth loving today. Love everyone. Come alive to the beautiful fragrance of His love. Bless people about you today with His love.

You are to grow up into the Head. You are to be like Jesus. You don't need a shepherd to get the Word of God for you. Jesus will give it to you.

2 Pet. 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Through God's Word (the written Word especially) you become partakers of God's

divine nature. His nature is in you. His love is in you. His power is in you. His life is in you. His victory is in you. His prosperity is in you. Hallelujah! His guidance is, also, in you.

John 14:21: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Jesus manifests Himself to you when you walk in His Word.

Read that again, He will usually manifest Himself to you directly rather than through your shepherd.

John 14:23: ". . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

As you keep His Word, then He and the Father both come to you and take up their abode in you. You become headquarters for God.

It is an insult to the Word of God to let a shepherd take the place of the Lord in your life.

You will keep His words. He will come to you. He takes over in your life.

In a strict neo-discipleship program as it is being taught today, it is literally impossible for this to happen. You cannot let God be Lord in your life. Your shepherd is your lord. His word

prevails over all other. You need to seek the Lord, dear one. Loose yourself from this bondage. It is an oppression to the children of God. It is sent from hell to destroy the love of God in the saints who have burned all bridges and want to move on in God.

John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

You are on speaking terms with God yourself. Faith comes alive in your heart through His Word. He is guiding you. You are becoming that minister of power and miracles within the framework of your calling and your ability to flow in God.

Acts 20:32: ". . . I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

God's Word will build you up and give you a place right along side the greatest. Refuse the roll of a dumb sheep. You are a king. You are a son. You are an eagle saint. Come alive, man or woman of God.

You have an inheritance with the greatest of saints. You are to allow the Word of God and the direct ministry of God leading you by His spirit to build you up so that you, too, can walk in His strength.

You are not down under. You do not have to be limited to the life or light of a shepherd. You

must be free to follow the real shepherd Jesus Christ.

John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

It is the ministry of the Word of God in the believer that creates the Christ life in you. His Words were with power. (Lk. 4:32) He has given to us His Father's Words. (Jn. 17:14)

His Words set you apart unto God.

His Words cause you to take on His nature.

His Words cause you to be set free. It is the truth that sets you free. (John 8:32)

1 John 2:5: "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

God's love is perfected in you as you allow yourself to be taken over by His Word.

You keep God's Word by knowing it first of all.

You keep God's Word by loving others.

You keep God's Word by maturing into the likeness of Jesus.

You cannot keep God's Word by listening to the shepherd all day long.

Eph. 5:26-27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Only God's Word can sanctify and cleanse you.

It will be God's Word that brings you into the Father's presence.

You are made holy and without blemish by studying, obeying, and walking in His Word. No man's word will ever take the place of the Word of the Lord.

Yes, God can speak a word of prophecy to you, occasionally, through another brother. (He may or may not be your shepherd.)

Daily you need to abide in HIS Word.

CHRIST IS FORMED IN THE DISCIPLE AS HE WALKS IN LOVE.

1 John 3:17: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

You have a choice to love or not to love. You can close up your compassion and disregard the needs of the individual, or you can open up your heart and serve him with your blessings.

Neo-discipleship does not give you this freedom. You must submit. You must obey. You are commanded to obey.

Out of a heart of love and compassion open up your life to be a blessing to others by releasing Christ to them.

Confess that you have compassion for the needs of those about you.

Each day stand and confess that you will love others.

Be conscious of Jesus' love.

Jesus was active in sharing His financial blessings with others. He constantly gave to the poor. This must be the attitude of a true disciple. The disciple must be obedient to the Holy Spirit in sharing his material blessings.

1 Tim. 6:17-18: *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."*

It is noticed here that Timothy was to exhort and charge them to live a godly life. Those that were rich were to share their blessings with others. It was a voluntary thing. It wasn't something that was dictated. The shepherds gave forth the Word. The people had to make up their minds to obey or disobey. The preacher may have a word for you. His responsibility is to share it with you. He is not primarily concerned with enforcing it. You must make up your own mind concerning the action you take.

Love is an act of your will. You choose to love. You choose to obey the Lord. Any program that orders you to do something in a legalistic fashion causes coldness and doubt.

God alone can command you to do something; even then you have the choice to obey or disobey. This makes your obedience

an act of love and submissiveness which honors God. If it is forced on you with no choice on your part, it is servitude.

Choosing to obey the shepherd is not a choice to obey God. It is an act of your will that identifies you with a man.

You had better identify with the Lord.

1 John 4:12: “. . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

The true disciple loves his fellow man. He does not separate himself in small sheepfolds of ten or twelve people. He identifies with the entire Body of Christ. He works with a local congregation and is not constantly fearful of the other shepherds and other groups. He is one with all of God's Body.

True discipleship then is walking in God's love and loving the brethren. It is then that God will fully dwell in you.

1 John 4:16: “. . . God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

It is when you dwell in love that God takes over in you.

It is not when you dwell in a cell group that God takes over in you.

Go out into the world today and love people. Demonstrate to the world the love of Jesus. Become love conscious. Get all excited about loving people who go down the highways. Concentrate on loving people.

Release Holy Ghost love on people. Do this daily. Become conscious of doing it. Live in it. Now you are becoming a disciple of Jesus.

1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

As you learn to love people, confidence is born in your life. You release yourself. You begin to realize that you can contribute something to people. You become an asset.

Perfect love destroys insecurity. You cease being self-conscious and become love-conscious. You reach out to others and love them and bless them. Fear leaves.

Insecurity leaves.

God's love is what you need.

Eph. 3:19: "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

Christ is dwelling in your heart. You are allowing this to happen by faith. You are being rooted and grounded in love. He becomes our life. He becomes your guide.

Why should you ever think of needing someone to tell you every move to make?

In Eph. 3:18 God's Word speaks of you being able to comprehend with all saints the breadth, length, depth, and height. You are beginning to know the love of God which passeth knowledge. You are being filled with the fullness of God.

How much of God do you have? You are being filled with the fullness of God. Can't you see this. The Lord is your Shepherd. He will never leave you. Your earthly shepherd cannot begin to do what your Heavenly Shepherd has already done.

Love your earthly shepherd. Counsel with him when needed, but do not submit your life to him. He, too, is a man with faults and short comings.

CHRIST IS FORMED IN THE DISCIPLE THROUGH THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The teaching in Eph. 4:11-13 leads you to understand that the Lord has set certain ministries into the Body. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints."

The Holy Spirit set these ministries in the Body. It was not a chain of command dictatorship setting into ministries those who would be subject to a doctrine of man. Hallelujah! It is Jesus who does it all.

It is as you speak in the heavenly language that you are edified in this discipleship.

1 Cor. 14:4: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself . . ."

It is the Spirit-led life which produces discipleship.

Rom. 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

It is the Father talking to you through the Spirit who gives guidance.

John 5:19: “. . . The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

John 1:50: “. . . Thou shalt see greater things than these.”

You, too; shall have revelations yourself.

You, too, will be directed by the Holy Ghost.

You shall see greater things.

1 John 4:17: “. . . As he is, so are we in this world.”

You are not down under some shepherd. You are one with your shepherd in Christ. You are one with Jesus. As He is, so are you in this world right now. You can receive guidance. You can receive revelations. You are a king. You are a priest. You are an overcomer. The Comforter has come. He is leading you today. (John 14:26)

TRUE DISCIPLES ARE TO MATURE AND HAVE THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

How can you do this if your shepherd has no vision? You are forever doomed to the life of that shepherd. You can not do it with the best of shepherds if he demands that you submit to him. There is no man whom you can trust like Jesus. Man will fail you, but Jesus will never fail you.

John 14:12: “. . . He that believeth on

**me, the works that I do shall he do also;
and greater works than these shall he do;
because I go unto my Father."**

The Lord expects good works out of you.

He expects you to get up and go about the Father's business.

Stop saying, "I can't."

**John 17:18: "As thou hast sent me into
the world, even so have I also sent them
into the world."**

Jesus was sent by the Father to do His work here on the earth. Jesus stayed in contact with the Father. God spoke to Him. He obeyed the Father.

You have the same commission. Every believer is sent by the Lord. Some move in more fully than others.

God's call is on your life. Find which way He wants you to go, and go. The life of Jesus is in you. The commission of Jesus is upon you. Now get with it.

Get up, stretch out your spiritual antennas, and hear "thyself" from God.

Love your shepherd, but do not be limited by your shepherd.

Shake thyself from neo-discipleship legalism.

Love the brethren.

I love you!

CHAPTER 6

GOD IS SPEAKING UNITY TO HIS DISCIPLES TODAY



There are many needs today in the Body of Christ. The greatest need is unity. This unity must come by the Holy Spirit. It must not be forced unity such as a shepherd demanding obedience.

God is doing something today.

In the early part of the twentieth century Pentecostal revival God began to give a clearer picture of the Godhead. He began to show the unity or oneness of the Godhead. Men began to see that the three are one. Soon they had made an iron-fisted doctrine of it. They began to look for scriptures which would support their views rather than seek a balance.

Soon the strong trinitarian exponents were looking for teachings to support their theory.

Neither was trying to listen to the voice of God. They were too busy trying to prove their doctrine. Soon a split occurred. The "oneness" went one way and the "trinitarians" went the other.

Now they have two basic camps. The

"oneness" are called "Jesus Only." They are strongly anti-trinitarian in view. They often are very argumentative. Constantly they are on the offensive.

The "trinitarians" have swung strongly the other way. They are not so argumentative, but they are very strong in their belief.

The truth of the matter is that both are right. There is a oneness in the Godhead. There is a trinity, also. You can prove either point with the Scripture. Do not take either side. It is a joy just to let the Word speak and adjust your thinking.

Enjoy the fact that God is three "persons." Enjoy the fact that the three are, also, one. Let God put it together.

God is doing something today. He is bringing unity to the Body of Christ. Some of the brethren are getting trigger happy and are trying to legislate unity. Others are getting angry and leaning away from all unity. Do not do either. Hang in there. The Spirit will create the unity which God is calling forth.

UNITY IS GOD'S PLAN TO OVERCOME SATAN.

Judges 20:1: "Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man . . ."

Judges 20:8: "And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house."

Judges 20:11: “. . . Knit together as one man.

The children of Israel were fighting against their own flesh and blood, but they were united in their efforts. It is interesting that God honored disunity to bring about unity.

Benjamin had sinned. Israel was fighting one of her own tribe. They were not doing so good either. God encouraged them and ordered them out again. God wanted sin cleansed from the camp. It took disunity to create the unity.

There is disunity in the camp today. You cannot ignore it. You must come against the error, but you must not commit the sin of going too far out of balance and missing God on the other side.

The children of Israel went out as one man. They were knit together. May there come the same such unity in the Body of Christ today without resorting to the strong-fisted legalism which is seen in the shepherd oriented or neo-discipleship groups.

JESUS' PRAYER WAS FOR UNITY.

John 17:21: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

John 17:23: “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

When the Spirit instigated unity arrives, power will arrive with it.

Men will then see Jesus in the saints.

Then they will say, "The Father really does love men as He loved Jesus." They will see the same works in the church as were seen in Jesus.

A car that is out of "unity" or time has little power.

A church that is divided has little power.

This unity cannot be legislated. The division will still be there. It will have to come from the Lord working the sin and failure from the hearts of men.

YOU ARE TO WORK FOR UNITY.

Eph. 4:2-3: *"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

Have a tender, humble spirit. Walk in meekness and longsuffering. Bear with your brother when he is at fault. Endeavour to bring about unity in the Spirit.

None of this hints of legislated unity. It speaks of give and take on the part of all.

Phil. 2:2: *"... Having the same love, being of one accord, and one mind."*

Strife and vainglory or pride must not be part of your life.

Lowliness in mind towards each other. Esteem others better than yourself. Be like

Jesus who was humble and obedient to the Father. Become a servant to your fellow man. Do not assume the roll of dictator to your fellow man. Do not assume the role of a floor mat either.

Be full of love for the brethren. Be of one accord and of one mind.

You must not ignore sin. Sometimes differences must be dealt with. You must never sweep dirt under the rug and ignore it. It will soon get out of hand.

This is what has happened in the Charismatic movement. Leaders felt that the error would go away so they have ignored the error in other leaders. Soon the dirt under the rug became a mountain. It has to be dealt with now.

**UNITY IS A FRUIT OF THE MOVE OF GOD,
NOT OF LEGALISM.**

Acts 1:14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication . . ."

The Lord had commanded them to wait for the promise. They obeyed. The spirit of unity was automatic. It was not legislated.

Acts 5:12: "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.)"

Revival followed this spontaneous unity. The Spirit created the unity and the miracles.

The people just kept obeying the Spirit, and the Spirit kept bringing more unity. It was a spirit of cooperation with the move of God. They did not stop and have a meeting to decide how to establish the unity. It just flowed out of what was already happening. The result was revival. "Believers were the more added to the Lord."

True discipleship is not primarily making disciples out of disciples. Discipleship is reaching out with the Spirit to the lost.

It is God's program. He will put it together if you will cooperate with Him.

GOD IS BRINGING ABOUT UNITY IN THE HOME.

Again this must not be legislated. Husband or wife or shepherd cannot force this unity. You must cooperate with it. It will come.

Gen. 2:24: "... They shall be one flesh."

There is unity in the natural. Let there be unity in the spiritual.

Eph. 5:22-23: "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church . . ."

Christ does not force the church into unity or submission. He loves the church and longsuffering even when the church is in error.

A husband must not force the wife into submission. He must be longsuffering and tender. He must love her into submission. He must never demand submission. He earns his right to be head by proper Christ-like actions.

An unsaved husband is head in the natural, but, in the full sense, his headship cannot function until he is obeying the Lord.

Men are to love "their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." It is healthy for a man to have a Christ-like attitude toward his wife. He cannot kick her around. He cannot demand. He must love even as Christ loves. This is healthy. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself." When you fight your wife, in many cases you are taking out your own short comings and frustrations on her. When you love your wife, you are actually healing your own short comings. You do reap what you sow.

Let there be unity in the home.

There must be give and take in a marriage relationship.

CHILDREN ARE TO BE UNITED WITH THEIR PARENTS.

Eph. 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to

wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Children, obey your parents. Stop this rebellion against them. Parents you are to strive not to provoke your children to anger and rebellion. Many of the problems in the children are a direct result of the parents' failure by under-correcting or over-correcting the child. They may also come from ungodly lives lived before the child.

Children, you must forgive your parents. You must move above their problems as well as your own.

Long life is promised in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament to children who will obey their parents.

The child must be free to obey God first. If the parents refuse to follow God, the child must take a stand.

Each case stands on its own merits. Some children will have to come against their parents completely and even leave home if need be. Others will be able to make some adjustments. Some children will deem it wise to go with parents to lukewarm churches for a while. God will make a way for each individual to grow if he or she will seek the Lord. There can be no rule. You must seek the Lord for your own answers.

HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Confess that you are a soul winner. Believe this. Believe that God will draw you to

someone. Expect the Lord to put people in your path. Sometimes you will do this by a planned program of going out to the highways and to the hedges. This may be prison work, hospital visitation and soul winning, door to door visitation or other types of contacts.

Learn how to lead a soul to Christ. There is no set method with God, but there is a basic principle.

Show the man that he is a sinner. Rom. 3:10, Rom. 3:23.

Show the man or woman God's love and provision for his salvation. Rom. 5:8, Rom. 6:23.

Show the individual that he or she must believe and confess Christ. Rom. 10:9-10.

Show the individual that he must act now. Rom. 10:13.

There are many approaches to leading a person to Jesus. Sometime you will spend weeks witnessing to that individual. Other times you will do it in a matter of minutes.

Dedicate yourself unto the Lord with a definite purpose.

Women can confess and believe God for favor with their neighbors. You can have a "tea party." Then gradually bring the "tea party" around to a Bible study. Lead these people to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit.

Do not draw these people to yourself.

Draw them to Jesus Christ and to a local church.

Each person should have from one to five or six people to whom he is ministering with one purpose in mind. This purpose should be to develop these people into workers.

Believe that over a period of time you will be able to bring several families to the Lord.

Believe that these families will be enlisted into the ministry of the local church.

Don't bring these people into a dead church.

Stay with these people from six to eight months. Visit them. Work with them. Develop them into a ministry. Teach them how to win souls. Reproduce the ministry of Christ into them. Develop disciples.

CONCLUSION

Let your spiritual ear be tuned into God's program.

Be sensitive to His Spirit.

Do your part to bring about unity both in the Body of Christ and in the home by prayer and obedience. Do your part to bring unity to your country and to the entire world.

Many prayer groups are ready for more unity. They need to get pastors over them and step out into a full church program. Let God lead. Some are not ready.

Some Charismatics who are floating around and not really putting forth an effort anywhere need to pray about identifying with a local work. This should not bring about bondage, but it should conserve and create power. Great strength will be added to local churches when you begin to assume the role of a responsible citizen in that church.

Many of you are looking for perfection in a local work before joining its ranks. Forget it. There are no such churches.

Someone has said, "If there were a perfect church, you would mess it up when you joined."

Find a local work with which you can work. Give it all you have. Cooperate with it as much as possible without being placed in bondage to some perverted program.

Maintain your own individual freedom and, at the same time, submit to the local work. Jesus must be first. Your family must be taken into consideration. There must be a balance. Never become a slave to some pastor's unreasonable demands. Do the best you can to work in a local situation. In many cases great unity will come about through the efforts of only a few people.

Emphasize soul winning. A church which reaches out to the lost is honored by the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord will be present.

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DOES THE BIBLE EMPHASIZE THE SHEEPHOOD OF THE BELIEVER?

In the New Testament the word "sheep" is used approximately twenty-two times as pertaining to God's children.

In the New Testament the word "son", "sons", or "children" denotes the sons of God or the children of God fifty-six times.

In the New Testament the word "heirs" pertains to heirs of the kingdom or heirs of salvation, etc. thirteen times.

The word "saints" is applied to God's children sixty times. This is to say nothing of the many times they are called a "king", "priest", "conqueror", "overcomer", "brethren", etc.

The "sheep-herders" lose out.

To overemphasize the characteristics of a sheep is to destroy the greater truth of the Word of God. The Word of God exhorts true teachers of the Word of God to rightly divide the Word.

This book exposes the error of some discipleship teachings and speaks of the unity which is coming about today by the Spirit of God rather than legalistic legislation by so called shepherd principles or doctrine.



"SWEETER THAN HONEY"

PSALM 10:10